

**CANADA'S FAST-TRACK REFUGEE PLAN:
UNANSWERED QUESTIONS AND IMPLICATIONS
FOR U.S. NATIONAL SECURITY**

HEARING

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON
HOMELAND SECURITY AND
GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS
UNITED STATES SENATE
ONE HUNDRED FOURTEENTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

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CANADA'S FAST-TRACK REFUGEE PLAN: UNANSWERED QUESTIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR U.S. NATIONAL SECURITY

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 2016

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY
AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC.

The Committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:01 a.m., in room 342, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Ron Johnson, Chairman of the Committee, presiding.

Present: Senators Johnson, Portman, Lankford, Ayotte, Sasse, Carper, McCaskill, Tester, Heitkamp, Booker, and Peters.

OPENING STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN JOHNSON

Chairman JOHNSON. This hearing will come to order.

I want to welcome the witnesses and thank you again for changing your flights and being flexible here because of our snowstorm in Washington, D.C. It is kind of funny because I am from Wisconsin. We are used to snow. People say, "Oh, these guys just cannot handle it". I mean, let us face it. Twenty-some inches of snow is difficult for any part of the country to handle. I am kind of glad that it is melting pretty fast.

But, again, thank you for coming. I read your testimony and I appreciate your thoughtful testimony. I am looking forward to a good hearing.

Let me ask that my written statement be entered into the record,¹ without objection.

And, I just want to start with a quote. We had a foiled terrorist plot in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. It was not Israel. It was not Syria. It was not Afghanistan. It was not Iraq. It was not San Bernadino. It was in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. And the foiled terrorist's name was Samy Mohammed Hamzeh. There were a couple of confidential human sources—that is how they are referred to—and in the criminal complaint, there are a number of quotes from Mr. Hamzeh to these informants, and I just want to read you the quotes.

"I am telling you, if this hit is executed, it will be known all over the world. The people will be scared and the operations will increase. This way, we will be igniting it. I mean, we are marching at the front of war and we will eliminate everyone."

¹ The prepared statement of Senator Johnson appears in the Appendix on page 35.

Now, this was a plot in the Masonic Temple in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Further in the complaint, Mr. Hamzeh says that he would be 100 percent happy if he is able to slaughter 30 human beings.

So, the purpose of this hearing is to take a look at the potential threat. We have had 13 hearings on border security here in terms of our Southern and our Northern Borders as well as our maritime border. I think that the conclusion—and I think that most of the Committee Members would agree with me—is that our borders are not secure. You take a look at the danger—the risk.

I mean, obviously, we have far more illegal crossings on our Southern Border. Canada, generally, is not a threat. I go fishing up there. You have great walleyes. I mean, I love Canadians. We have a very special relationship with Canada. As a result, we have a pretty unsecured border with Canada. It has just never really represented much of a threat.

Islamic terror represents a threat. This is real. It is growing. This is a legitimate concern.

We are all compassionate. We want to solve these problems. But, we also have to, I think, recognize our responsibility, which is doing everything that we can to keep our Nation safe and secure.

And, so, I mean, the fact of the matter is that, when I take a look at the history, the number of refugees that are resettled in Canada since about 2005, the high-water mark was 35,000—but it is averaging somewhere between the 20,000 and 25,000-person range. Well, Prime Minister Trudeau now is committed to admitting 25,000, and then 50,000 total, by the end of 2016. That is a pretty significant ramp-up and over a pretty short period of time.

In America, it takes somewhere between 18 to 24 months to properly vet a refugee, on average—and that is from all of the countries that refugees are coming from. It is far more difficult to try and get the information—we have heard this in testimony before this Committee—in a war-torn country, like Syria. So, how can you do the proper vetting? How can we assure that there are no shortcuts taken? And, that is really the purpose of this hearing, to just let us lay out the reality. Will there be shortcuts taken? Is that something that really ought to concern Americans here, as Canada is really ramping up—and again, all with wonderful intentions, being very compassionate—admitting a much higher level of refugees than they normally take in and at a much faster pace.

So, again, I appreciate the witnesses being here and I look forward to your testimony.

With that, I will turn it over to Senator Carper.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR CARPER

Senator CARPER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Good morning, everybody. It is nice to see you. Thank you for joining us today.

A couple of months ago, in November, our Committee held a hearing right here on our country's ability to screen Syrian refugees, and, at the time, there was a lot of unease over the Syrian refugee population and the security risk that some believe that they might pose to us in this country. We learned a whole lot at that hearing that day. I will just mention a couple of the things that we learned.

We learned that the screening for refugees takes place wholly overseas before a refugee ever sets foot on U.S. soil. We learned that the United Nations High Commission on Refugees (UNHCR) narrows down the list of potential refugees long before the United States ever considers a single application. We learned that once we receive a list of pre-screened refugees from the United Nations (U.N.), the State Department (DOS) and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) still conduct their own extensive vetting, and this vetting includes biometric and biographic checks, health checks, and in-person interviews conducted by immigration analysts who are trained to spot fraud and deception.

We also learned that refugees are consistently vetted against the full repository of U.S. national security databases. And, we learned that our program focuses on the most vulnerable refugees, mostly children and families. It is no wonder that the security experts who testified before our Committee that day said that the Refugee Resettlement Program (USRP) is probably the last way a potential terrorist would try to come to our country.

What I have said, anecdotally, is that a member of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) would have to be crazy or stupid to try to get here through our most closely vetted program and wait 2 years to go through the most extensive vetting process. Why would you do that when you have other options to pursue—including, maybe, going to Canada. We will find out about that today.

But, today, we are going to learn more about the Canadian refugee program, and from what I can tell, it looks a lot like ours. And, like us, Canada carefully screens potential candidates while they are overseas. They also run their own security checks. Indeed, those checks include systemic consultation with the United States, vetting against our terrorism and national security databases under information sharing agreements that we have in place with Canada.

And, it is true that Canada is doing the screening faster than usual—but that does not mean that they are doing less screening than they previously have done. The Canadian government has surged resources to speed up the time of refugee processing and states, emphatically, that it is not cutting corners.

In fact, all of the Members of this Committee recently received a letter from the Canadian Ambassador to the United States laying out the screening process for these refugees in close cooperation with our own security and border agencies. I would like to place that letter in the record,¹ Mr. Chairman, at this time. I ask unanimous consent for that, please.

The first group of refugees that Canada is reviewing is restricted to families, women, and other at-risk populations. I should also point out that, with very few exceptions, almost no single fighting-age males are being considered in the first batch of 25,000 refugees. Moreover, nearly half of the refugees are privately sponsored—that is, families or organizations in Canada have committed to helping them adjust to life in that country and have even agreed to pay to support them for that first year. That kind of arrange-

¹ The letter referenced by Senator Carper appears in the Appendix on page 56.

ment can be, I think, very helpful in integrating new arrivals and helping to safeguard against alienation or radicalization.

Like our country, Canada has a long, proud history of helping refugees. In fact, some of the Southeast Asian refugees who were resettled in Canada in earlier decades are now stepping up to sponsor Syrian families.

And, finally, it is very important to point out that it would take 4 years before refugees living in Canada would be potentially eligible for citizenship and the right to travel visa-free to the United States. Until then, they would still need a visa to come to our country and then they would be subject to fresh screening against U.S. criminal intelligence databases before they can cross our border.

In short, I think that we should support Canada, our ally, in doing the right thing in the most secure manner possible when it comes to Syrian refugees. And as we do that, let us keep our eye on the ball. Vilifying refugees coming to our country or to Canada only serves as a distraction from the real challenges of defeating ISIS on the battlefield and combating homegrown violent extremism (HVE) here, on our shores. Providing safe haven for a few of the millions of people victimized by ISIS and the Syrian war will not hurt that cause. I actually believe that it helps us.

So, thank you, Mr. Chairman, for holding this hearing. We welcome all of you. Thank you for joining us.

Chairman JOHNSON. Thank you, Senator Carper, and that letter from the Ambassador will be entered into the record, without objection.

Senator CARPER. Thank you.

Chairman JOHNSON. It is the tradition of this Committee to swear in witnesses, so if you will all stand and raise your right hand.

Do you swear the testimony you will give before this Committee will be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you, God?

Mr. MAMANN. I do.

Mr. HARRIS. I do.

Mr. MANDEL. I do.

Ms. DAWSON. I do.

Chairman JOHNSON. Please be seated.

Our first witness is Guidy Mamann. Mr. Mamann is a Canadian immigration lawyer and the foundering partner of Mamann, Sandaluk and Kingwell, LLP. Previously, he worked for Canada's Department of Citizenship and Immigration and served as Immigration Officer at Toronto's Pearson International Airport. Mr. Mamann.

TESTIMONY OF GUIDY MAMANN,¹ SENIOR PARTNER, MAMANN, SANDALUK & KINGWELL, LLP, TORONTO, CANADA

Mr. MAMANN. Thank you very much, Senator Johnson. Senator Johnson, distinguished Members of the Committee, and ladies and gentlemen, I want to thank you very much for inviting me here today to discuss the security implications of and unanswered ques-

¹ The prepared statement of Mr. Mamann appears in the Appendix on page 39.

tions about Canada's recent plan to resettle Syrian refugees in Canada.

As I am sure you are aware from my biography, I am a Canadian immigration lawyer who has dedicated his 30-year career to bringing all kinds of newcomers to Canada, including thousands of refugees. I very much believe that all countries should do their utmost to help provide safe harbor to those in genuine need of protection.

You have not asked me here today to champion the cause of refugees, but to address your concerns about the security implications of Canada's plan. To understand the security risks associated with this plan, you must first understand the context in which this plan evolved.

In the months prior to our Federal election this past October, Justin Trudeau and his Liberal Party made it a major part of their election campaign to bring 25,000 Syrian refugees to Canada by the end of 2015. He won the election and became Prime Minister on November 4, 2015. This left him only 57 days to process and land 25,000 refugees as promised.

I was asked on national television if this was doable and I expressed great doubt that it was. I knew that such applications normally take about 62 months, and sometimes even longer, to conclude. So, not surprisingly, the target was missed when only 6,000 refugees arrived in Canada prior to the December 31 target date.

To date, to complete the shortfall of 19,000 applications, the target date has now been extended by 2 months. However, the government has also announced that an additional 25,000 refugees will be brought in by December 31 of this year. Accordingly, the initial plan for 25,000 is now doubled to 50,000 and the original estimated cost of 100 million has now been revised to over 1.2 billion.

This is not a rescue mission—this is a resettlement mission. The people who we are helping have already escaped the conflict zone and have already reached safety in Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey. We are only relocating them and offering them permanent resettlement. We are making no attempt whatsoever to rescue people who are actually in Syria and who are in imminent danger.

Accordingly, there is no apparent urgency to the situation. Nonetheless, the self-imposed deadlines have been adopted. This will undoubtedly put tremendous pressure on our security personnel to complete their background checks by the target dates.

Let me address some of the main security issues arising from this plan, as you have requested. The Liberal government has assured the Canadian public that no security steps will be skipped and that all applicants will be fully screened before arrival. The Canada Border Service Agency (CBSA), the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), and the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) have all stated that they are up to the task. This was affirmed by the Canadian ambassador to the United States, Gary Doer, who wrote to this Committee last week in response to the scheduling of this hearing. I have no reason, whatsoever, to doubt any of them. I have worked opposite—but closely and cooperatively—with these agencies for my entire career and I do not doubt that they will not intentionally cut corners in order to deliver a politically expedient result.

However, they will be under tremendous pressure to deliver an unprecedented volume of work in record time. The performance of overseas security checks is a highly specialized field and it is difficult—if not impossible—to grow that skill in a short period of time. Our government has already deployed 500 officials to Jordan and Lebanon to help with medical and background checks. However, it is unclear what expertise these people might have and might bring to the table as well as what databases they may have to reference.

Furthermore, Canada closed its embassy in Damascus in 2012. The information that we have is old and many of the government offices in Syria that had reliable records have been destroyed or have been compromised. In any event, background checks cannot eliminate risk. They simply cannot tell us what will happen in the future.

Second, to contain risk, the Canadian plan excludes single men. The plan is only open to families, women, and children. Again, this measure will certainly help to reduce security risks, but it will not eliminate them. Case in point, the Boston Marathon bombing in 2013 was committed by two adult brothers who immigrated to the United States as refugees when they were just children. As for women, women are increasingly becoming involved in acts of terror. Again, consider the case of Tashfeen Malik and her husband, who sponsored her to the United States on a fiancée visa and who, together, killed 14 people in San Bernadino in December, 2015.

Third, I have been asked by your staff whether Canada's private sponsors might help to mitigate security risks by providing monitoring of the families that they have sponsored. These private citizens are not trained nor selected for such a role. They are simply good Canadians looking to provide financial help and settlement assistance. They are not expected to play any surveillance function.

Fourth, I have also been asked about the access that this group of 50,000 might have to the United States. As you mentioned, as permanent residents of Canada, they will not qualify for your Visa Waiver Program (VWP), but will qualify to become Canadian citizens in 4 years. Like all other Canadian citizens, they will then be able to present themselves at the U.S. border and seek admission right at the port of entry (POE).

Having said all of this, as you may know, our respective borders remain quite porous. Our checkpoints are only effective with respect to people who choose to use them. Many going in both directions successfully avoid our checkpoints every day.

Fifth, Canada passed some very controversial legislation in 2014 known as Bill C-24. It currently allows our government to revoke anyone's Canadian citizenship for serious acts against Canada, provided that the person is a dual national and is convicted of offenses relating to spying, treason, or terrorism. I do not believe that the United States has similar legislation. However, Prime Minister Trudeau has now promised to repeal those provisions once elected—and I anticipate that this will be happening very soon.

The last, but certainly not the least, source of potential concern is the demographics of this particular group of refugees. When compared to other groups of refugees, one can easily argue that this group represents a relatively high-risk demographic. Syria is wide-

ly considered to be a major hotbed of international terror. Large parts of the country are controlled by ISIS, which, sadly, enjoys some considerable local support. Virtually the entire country supports one of the three warring factions: either ISIS, the Assad government, or the rebels. All three groups have been associated with assorted atrocities and violations of human rights.

By definition, refugees do not necessarily come to our countries because they share our values. They come to our countries because they often have no other choice. Whether or not they possess or adopt our values is something that only time will tell.

I would like to identify some unanswered questions for Americans to think about, but I think that, due to time, I will wait until the question period.

In conclusion, Senators, the extent to which we help refugees and those in need defines who we are as a country. Canada has decided to accept 50,000 refugees from the millions displaced by the Syrian conflict. While I think that there was a better way of handling some aspects of this initiative, the cause of helping genuine refugees is a good one.

Having said that, there are unavoidable costs and risks associated with this type of endeavor. Our government believes that those risks are manageable. I know that we have experienced and dedicated men and women in our security agencies who are working feverishly to meet our government's timelines. Whether or not our efforts will work out well in the end, only time will tell.

Thank you.

Chairman JOHNSON. Thank you.

Our next witness is David Harris. Mr. Harris is the Director of the International Intelligence Program at INSIGNIS Strategic Research, Inc. Mr. Harris is a lawyer located in Ottawa, Canada with decades of national security intelligence affairs experience. Mr. Harris.

TESTIMONY OF DAVID B. HARRIS,¹ DIRECTOR, INTERNATIONAL INTELLIGENCE PROGRAM, INSIGNIS STRATEGIC RESEARCH, INC., OTTAWA, CANADA

Mr. HARRIS. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman and honorable Senators.

As the Committee clearly appreciates, the new Canadian government took office committed to fast-tracking the resettlement of 25,000 Syrian refugees into Canada between early November 2015 and the end of that year. Complications led the government to adjust the intake goals to 10,000 before the end of 2015 and another 15,000 prior to March 1, 2016. By last week, about 15,000 Syrian refugees had entered Canada. Recent reports indicate that Canada is expecting to raise its target level and take in 50,000 Syrian refugees by the end of 2016. I will focus on the core 25,000 number for the sake of expediency in the course of this statement.

Given the threat picture in Syria and the scale of intake, security considerations, of course, require thorough attention. First, recall that the U.S. population exceeds by nine times Canada's 35 million population. Therefore, 25,000 refugees in Canada would be the

¹ The prepared statement of Mr. Harris appears in the Appendix on page 42.

equivalent of 225,000 refugees in the United States—all of this by March 1. Britain—almost twice Canada’s population—will take several years to admit 20,000.

And the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) Director, James Comey, has highlighted the screening difficulties that America would face by admitting 10,000 Syrians. He warned that information gaps could lead to inadequate screening. If the extensive U.S. intelligence system would have trouble security screening 10,000 Syrians in a year, how likely is it that Canada—even with valuable U.S. assistance—could adequately screen $2\frac{1}{2}$ times that number in 4 months?

Canada’s special fast-track processing of 25,000 Syrians in 4 months should be compared to the standard, non-fast track process 13-month timeline for government-assisted Syrian refugees and 27-month timeline for the privately sponsored. Note that this 25,000 figure is roughly equal to Canada’s entire annual refugee intake, traditionally.

And, remember the risk context. Apart from the accounts of suspected ISIS members, that ISIS aims to penetrate international refugee streams, a Lebanese cabinet minister warned in September 2015 that at least 2 percent of the 1.1 million Syrians in Lebanon’s refugee camps—about 20,000 people—were connected to ISIS extremism. Canada takes refugees from Lebanese UNHCR camps.

More generally, the Arab Center for Research & Policy Studies’ polls determined that 13 percent of Syrian refugees in Lebanon, Jordan, and Turkey—source countries for Canada’s Syrian migrants—had positive views of the Islamic State. How many more might have favorable views of al-Qaeda, al-Nusra, Hezbollah, the Assad militias, and other non-ISIS threat groups?

In some cases, evidence for screening might be available if, for example, a migrant’s traces have been found on an improvised explosive device (IED) in Syria or Iraq or where a time-consuming investigation has connected the dots. But, how readily can one gain access to a migrant’s history when that migrant is from a hostile or chaotic country? We cannot reliably confer with authorities of such jurisdictions—assuming authority exists—about many prospective refugees.

It is suggested, in Canada, that risk can be mitigated by barring unaccompanied adult Syrian males. But, people lie about age. Additionally, many males and females below the age of majority are in ISIS’s ranks. Also, what effect would an adult male embargo have on at-risk, adult gay and other males targeted by terrorists?

Meanwhile, when favoring women with children and men with families, do we know who is actually married to whom and whose children are accompanying whom? Are some ISIS fighters’ families involved? Would they, in turn, sponsor relatives or ostensible relatives?

Are there safety issues for existing North American minorities in a mass movement from a homeland where the demonizing of Jews is national policy and life-threatening lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) persecution is a crisis? And what of the importing of people from a region where anti-black racism is an especially serious matter?

Beyond this, secret German government documents reportedly claim that refugee numbers should be multiplied by a family factor of between four and eight to determine how many more migrants will ultimately be sponsored by current refugees. What could future refugee to refugee chain sponsorship mean for Canadian stability and border security?

We must also ask what security resources are being diverted to the fast-track project at a time when security is already burdened by an existing annual immigration intake of almost 300,000 people—one of the biggest per capita figures in the world and at least double per capita American immigration.

In the past, there have been few newcomers to Canada who were crossing the U.S. border for terrorist purposes. But, failed millennium bomber Ahmed Ressam as well as Ghazi Ibrahim Abu Mezer's 1997 arrest in his Brooklyn bomb factory remind us of the cross-border risks. Concern also exists that extremists could move north from the United States—about the chronic problem of migrants with U.S.-granted visas from Syria, and elsewhere, turning up in Canada and making refugee claims.

Greater transparency in Canada's Syrian refugee security process would reassure Canadians and their allies. Fortunately, the current Canadian government's stated commitment to transparency gives hope that details of the Syrian refugee security process will be made public. Indeed, the Canadian government, through its Ambassador in Washington, may have begun the process with a recent statement. The security-related details should include the security criteria used during Syrian migrants' security interviews, statistics regarding the acceptance and the rejection rates, and the record of time spent on the security investigation and screening per refugee.

There is little doubt that those in Canada tasked with the job of screening refugees are doing the best that they can, given the constraints. But, the constraints are significant and we must be realistic about that fact.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman JOHNSON. Thank you, Mr. Harris.

Our next witness is Dean Mandel. Mr. Mandel is a U.S. Border Patrol Agent currently serving in the Buffalo Sector. Mr. Mandel has served as a Border Patrol Agent since 2006, and prior to his position, he served as Petty Officer Third Class for the United States Navy. Mr. Mandel.

**TESTIMONY OF DEAN MANDEL,¹ BORDER PATROL AGENT,
BUFFALO SECTOR, U.S. CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION
(TESTIFYING ON BEHALF OF THE NATIONAL BORDER
PATROL COUNCIL)**

Mr. MANDEL. Chairman Johnson and Ranking Member Carper, thank you for providing me the opportunity to testify on behalf of the National Border Patrol Council (NBPC). It is truly an honor.

The NBPC represents the interests of 16,500 line agents with the U.S. Customs and Border Protection's (CBP's) Border Patrol. My name is Dean Mandel. I am an active duty Border Patrol Agent as-

¹The prepared statement of Mr. Mandel appears in the Appendix on page 47.

signed to the Buffalo Sector. I joined the Border Patrol in 2006, after having served in the U.S. Navy for 4 years.

We live in a highly connected world, and the tragedy in Paris is, unfortunately, an example of how one country's policies can impact its neighbors. As someone stationed on the Northern Border, I want to be clear, what happens in Canada matters to the United States. Whether it be Canadian policies toward refugees or immigration, their decisions impact U.S. security, given the size and nature of our shared border.

I started my career on the Southern Border, in Nogales, Arizona. In Nogales, we had air support, fencing, cameras, and a solid network of ground sensors. Although we never had sufficient manpower, in an emergency, we almost always had backup.

On the Northern Border, it is entirely different. Of the 21,000 agents in the Border Patrol, only 2,100 are assigned to the Northern Border. When you take into account supervisors who are not in the field, annual leave, sick leave, days off, training days, and the fact that we work with a three-shift rotation, we only have about 300 line agents guarding the Northern Border at any one time. I would estimate that there are approximately as many Capitol Police on duty right now protecting the Capitol complex as there are on the entire 4,000-mile Northern Border.

On the Southern Border, we have one agent for every linear mile. Each of these agents is made more effective by the entire infrastructure of fencing, cameras, air support, and sensors. On the Northern Border, we have one agent for every 13.5 miles and we have much less of this infrastructure.

On the Southern Border, if you ask an agent, they will probably tell you that, at best, we are 40 percent effective in apprehending illegal aliens and drug smugglers. On the Northern Border, I would estimate that the effectiveness rate is a fraction of this figure.

I know that there is significant controversy regarding Canada's recent decision to admit 25,000 Syrian refugees. In my opinion, it is very difficult to gauge the risk posed by these refugees and much of the risk will depend on the screening process utilized by the Canadians.

Candidly, of greater concern to me, from a border security perspective, are the over five million foreign visitors that enter Canada, annually. Canada is a diverse nation and has a per capita Muslim population three times our own. As a result, they have major inflows from tourists and business travelers throughout the Middle East.

Canada has a visa waiver system similar to ours, with 51 countries. The visa waiver system is a huge security gap because it is operated under an assumption that if you are, for example, from France, then you would pose no security risk. Given the number of terrorist cells uncovered in Europe, alone, this assessment of risk is completely false.

Starting in March, Canada will require visa waiver travelers to obtain an electronic travel authorization before being admitted. This is an important first step toward closing the security gap and will decrease our vulnerability. However, database checks are only as effective as the database, itself. As we saw in San Bernadino,

many terrorists simply are not on law enforcement's or the intelligence community's radar.

For visitors from non-visa waiver countries, Canada again has a system similar to ours. Applicants are required to submit photos, proof of financial support, a return ticket, and a police certificate from the country of residence. Although Canada takes its immigration laws seriously, like the United States, it also lacks a comprehensive visa-tracking system that ensures that individuals leave the country.

Finally, there is the issue of homegrown terrorism. Unfortunately, no country—including Canada and the United States—is immune from this threat. Given that Canadian citizens do not require a visa for visits less than 90 days, we are relying heavily on Canadian law enforcement and intelligence agencies to identify potential threats.

Canada is a valued partner when it comes to border security. Personally, I wish that we had such a partner on the Southern Border. However, we have failed to properly invest in our Northern Border. As a result, we are gambling that Canadian law enforcement and intelligence effectively uncover domestic terror cells and screen over five million visitors, annually, for threats. As an American, the idea that we would rely so heavily on a foreign government—even one as friendly, professional, and competent as Canada—concerns me.

Please remember that the Paris attackers organized their operation in Belgium, right under the noses of the Belgian security services. They were able to do this because the Belgian security services had been underfunded for years—despite the fact that it was common knowledge that, on a per capita basis, Belgians supplied more foreign fighters to ISIS than any other European Union (E.U.) country.

Northern Border Patrol Agents apprehend over 3,000 individuals, annually. Given that we only have about 300 agents per shift covering almost 4,000 miles of border, I think that we are doing a good job with what we have. The problem is that we simply do not have enough manpower. We have more agents in El Paso than we have on the entire Northern Border.

The NBPC believes that the current force level of 2,100 agents needs to be augmented by another 1,500 on our Northern Border. This additional manpower will help to decrease our almost complete reliance on Canadian law enforcement and intelligence agencies for our security.

Thank you again. I look forward to answering any questions that you may have.

Chairman JOHNSON. Thank you, Mr. Mandel.

Our final witness is Dr. Laura Dawson. Dr. Dawson is the Director of the Canada Institute at the Wilson Center. Previously, she served as a Senior Advisor on Economic Affairs at the United States Embassy in Ottawa. Dr. Dawson has taught U.S.-Canada relations at the Canadian School of Public Service and at Carleton University. Dr. Dawson.

TESTIMONY OF LAURA DAWSON, PH.D.,¹ DIRECTOR, CANADA INSTITUTE, WOODROW WILSON INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR SCHOLARS

Ms. DAWSON. Thank you so much, Senator Johnson, distinguished members of this panel, Members of the Committee, and ladies and gentlemen.

As pointed out in the introduction, I have worked on Canada-U.S. relations for more than 20 years as a professor and as a policy analyst. I have advised the United States and Canadian governments on Canada-U.S. relations. For 3 years, I worked as a Canadian analyst at the U.S. Embassy in Ottawa, so I watched every day the extent of Canada-U.S. cooperation on a range of issues. And, most recently, I became the Director of the Canada Institute at the Wilson Center, where our work is focused on Canada-U.S. relations. And, while I work at the Wilson Center, I live in Washington, D.C., so I am going to apologize in advance because I am going to say "We Canadians," even though I am a very proud D.C. resident now.

Canada has no greater friend or ally than the United States, and that is a responsibility that Canada takes very seriously. Canadian policies are going to differ from those of the United States from time to time. We are two sovereign countries. It is certain to happen. But, where we are aligned is the attention to shared security and to the safety of all citizens in our territories. That is a guiding principle of Canadian policymaking.

U.S.-Canada information sharing and security cooperation is unmatched between any two countries in the world—hearing about Belgium and hearing about France. With our framework of agreements on security, border, and law enforcement, Canadian-U.S. officials communicate directly with each other every single day and have well-developed institutional and personal relationships. They are picking up the telephone. There is not a diplomatic note required. You do not need to send a diplomatic envoy. They are picking up the phone and they are talking to each other many times a day.

At the embassy, it is required that foreign visitors—U.S. Government officials from the United States—register with the U.S. Embassy in the foreign country that they are going to visit—and they get tens or hundreds of visits a year. In Canada, there are thousands and thousands of U.S. officials who come every year for cooperation, for meetings, for dialogues, and for joint programming. Please keep in mind that it is a different relationship with Canada.

September 11 (9/11) was a catalyst for a new security and cooperation paradigm in Canada. Canadians recognize very seriously that an attack on one is an attack on all. The post-9/11 security measures that were implemented, like the 2007 Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI), were taken very seriously. Canadians did not question new security mechanisms, new security screening, and new equipment that was required by the United States. They just went ahead and did it because that was what we needed to do. And under the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative,

¹ The prepared statement of Ms. Dawson appears in the Appendix on page 50.

no one crosses our borders without a passport or an equivalent proof of security.

We have heard about the porous border—and you are right. We have great lakes and great fishing, and hundreds of miles of the Canada-U.S. border is actually underwater. I do not know how you build a wall underwater. We have pieces of the border that stretch through mountains.

So, what do we do about securing that border? What do we do about ensuring our security north and south? And, so, the principle of perimeter security is really important to keep in mind—and we do not hear about this enough. The 2011 “Beyond the Border Initiative” that was launched by Prime Minister Harper and President Obama is based on securing our joint perimeter. Rather than having to do so much at the land border—and, I agree, Mr. Mandel needs more reserves—we push out our joint screening and joint verification to our shared territory, so to our air, marine, and rail. We want to have full interoperability so that you, as Americans, can be sure that someone coming into Vancouver or someone coming into Halifax has the utmost level of screening and that this security reaches your level.

So, I have been really impressed by this “Beyond the Border Initiative” and I would like to see it continue. I would like to see Congressional attention paid to it to ensure that the “Beyond the Border Perimeter Initiative” is a matter of priority. New technologies in biometrics and data analytics have made this level of cooperation possible, but it is the highest level of commitment from both governments that have made it a reality.

It is a myth that the 9/11 attackers entered the United States through Canada. In fact, Canadian officials work really closely with American officials every single day. “Operation Smooth” was a joint initiative that led to the arrest of two men with al-Qaeda links, who were plotting to derail a train running between Toronto and New York in 2013.

Let us talk about refugees. Canada’s Syrian refugee policy may differ from that of the United States, but the level of attention to security is no less vigilant. No refugee can enter Canada before all biometric and biologic data is checked against U.S. criminal, immigration, and security databases. This is an automatic process. This is not something officials can decide to do or decide not to do if it is a busy day. This must take place. It is an automatic process.

According to the State Department, of the 785,000 refugees admitted to the United States, only a tiny fraction have been arrested or removed from the United States due to terrorism concerns—and none of these refugees were Syrian. If someone wishes to harm the United States or Canada, entering the country as a refugee is a very inefficient way to achieve this.

But, let us talk about Canadian safeguards against this possibility. We have heard that Canada is focusing on low-risk groups—families with children, single mothers, and LGBT men who have taken refuge in Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey. Sixty percent are women. Twenty-two percent are children. This is not the demographic of ISIS.

Cases are first vetted by the UNHCR and other organizations. I apologize, in my written testimony, it says just UNHCR. They are

vetted through other processes, as well. This is a typical process, though. Refugees are then—Canadian officials determine which of these candidates meet vulnerability criteria and those who do are invited to an admissibility interview. If they satisfy officials during the interview, then applicants are subject to a full health and security screening.

Ralph Goodale, Canada's Minister of Public Safety and the counterpart to the U.S. Secretary of Homeland Security, has made it clear that if there is any doubt about an applicant or about any of the data, that application will be put aside. And, all screening takes place before an individual gets on an airplane.

Yes, 25,000 is a very big number, but it is consistent with Canada's historic response to refugee crises. Canada accepted more than 250,000 refugees after World War II, 37,000 Hungarian refugees after 1956, 10,000 Czechs after 1968, and more than 50,000 Vietnamese boat people in the late 1980s. Before it was even an independent country, Canada was a haven for African Americans fleeing slavery. We have a history of accepting refugees and making a home for them.

The government has set a target, but there will always be delays. Resettlement is a complex process. But, the Prime Minister has been very clear: we will meet our target, but we will make sure that we do it right.

It looks like I am running over the time limit, but I wanted to let you know, I was a member of a refugee committee—resettlement committee—at my church in Ottawa, Canada. It was really hard work. It was not just a matter of signing some documents. We were engaged with the refugees every single day. We made sure that that family got to doctor's appointments and dental appointments, that the kids had babysitters, and that they had appropriate winter clothing. We made sure that they were a part of the Canadian community. It was not just, "Oh, here are some more refugees. Let us drop them in a ghetto in the city". They became part of our community and, as a result, have now contributed to Canada.

Lastly, to return to where I started, Canada is the United States' closest ally and largest trading partner. There is no relationship that Canada takes more seriously, and I urge the members of this Committee to treat that relationship with equal seriousness. Canada is not the weak link in the fight against terrorism. Rather, it is part of a shared security perimeter with the United States.

Thank you.

Chairman JOHNSON. Thank you, Dr. Dawson.

Again, I want to thank all of my colleagues for joining us here today. This is an important hearing. As a result of the attendance—it worked pretty well yesterday and we did not reduce the time limits. We will keep it at 7 minutes—but I will use my gavel. So, I want everybody—witnesses and Senators—aware of that 7-minute time limit and let us just keep to that so that everybody has a chance to ask questions.

Dr. Dawson, I just want to comment that I think that we all agree that the relationship with Canada is very special and highly valued. And, I agree that we all want to make sure that we do employ the utmost level of screening—and that is our concern. Presi-

dent Obama has the legal authority to let in 10,000 Syrian refugees. That increases the number of refugees in this country by 21 percent, which puts a potential management strain and possibly some short-circuiting—or taking shortcuts—within that process.

Canada is looking at—again, if you look at the history of resettling 25,000 refugees annually—increasing that by a factor of, basically, double. You are going from 25,000 to 50,000 to potentially 75,000 in one particular year. That could put on enormous strain.

Mr. Mamann—and, by the way, am I pronouncing that properly?

Mr. MAMANN. Mamann like salmon.

Chairman JOHNSON. OK. You mentioned that, on average, it normally takes 5 years to go through this process. Please just speak to that.

Mr. MAMANN. There are two processes. If you were on another day—not when we are in the middle of an election or involved in this particular project—you would be spending about 52 to 62 months bringing people in, in this fashion, from Afghanistan, Somalia, Congo, and Sudan. That is how long it would take.

The inland process—that is where someone comes on our shores and declares themselves a refugee and they have a hearing before the Immigration Refugee Board (IRB), a hearing to determine that they are a refugee. Then they apply for permanent residence. They fill out all of the forms. That process easily takes 2-and-a-bit years.

It is done in two stages. The first is a selection decision, so that we make sure that you have all of the forms ready, that everything is done. And then comes the background checks and the security checks. Only after that is completed do we have a person who is granted permanent residence.

Chairman JOHNSON. So, Mr. Mamann, because you mentioned that Canada has deployed 500 personnel to the Middle East to start vetting people over there—that expanded perimeter—which I think we all agree is a good way of doing it. Are those new hires or is that just taking people from the interior and moving them overseas to push out the perimeter?

Mr. MAMANN. They are taking people from the interior. In fact, my firm does all kinds of immigration work. We are not just refugee specialists. It is just a small part of what we do. We are getting letters now saying, “This officer has been reassigned to the Syrian project”, so you are not getting an answer for the next few months while they tackle those things. Those are officers who would be normally doing sponsorships, investor applications, and all kinds of professional immigration work.

I should say, if you were to ask me what I think of the 500, I would tell you that it does not really matter, because they are not going to Syria. They are outside of the country. The question here is the ability to verify information—and sometimes the only way that you can do that is by putting boots on the ground. Somebody tells you, “I am from this town” or “I am from this country”. How do you validate that from outside of the country? That is the concern, I think, that security agencies have. You do not have anything to measure it. The fact that someone had an iris scan or had fingerprints done and nothing showed up tells you nothing about what they were doing during the conflict and on whose side they fought.

Chairman JOHNSON. I have been seeing—and I might be wrong—but I have been seeing in the testimony, basically, that the manpower that Canada has in these immigration services—does anybody on the panel have any feel for how many personnel generally do the vetting of the approximately 25,000, on average, refugees that Canada lets in? Mr. Harris.

Mr. HARRIS. No, it is not entirely clear. It can involve all kinds of cooperation between different governments and agencies. So, as I said, it is not entirely clear, and this situation currently throws an enormous random variable into the overall challenge, I guess, that we are facing.

Chairman JOHNSON. Mr. Mandel, do you have any idea of what our counterparts in Canada have, in terms of personnel, to properly vet these folks? Or Dr. Dawson?

Mr. MANDEL. I do not. I do not have—

Ms. DAWSON. I do not have a number for you, but I can tell you that the Consular Service in Canada is different from that of the United States, so that officers who are trained as consular officers for all sorts of processing can also process refugee applications, whereas in the United States, I understand, you need a specialized refugee officer. My understanding, as Mr. Mamann was saying, is that a lot of folks are being deployed from other offices and that retired officers are being brought back into service as well.

Chairman JOHNSON. But, you acknowledge, in any kind of process, when you increase your workload by double or triple, that is going to put pressures on the process, correct?

Ms. DAWSON. I agree entirely.

Chairman JOHNSON. One of the things that I have been intrigued about with Canada's refugee program is their private sponsorship program. I would kind of like to have people just speak to that. I mean, to me, that does make an awful lot of sense, to bring people in that are sponsored by individuals who can support them financially and help them assimilate and integrate into society—which is another of my concerns. When you dramatically increase the number of people coming in, how good is the assimilation process undertaken going to be? Mr. Mamann.

Mr. MAMANN. The private sponsorship is actually an excellent device. It deflects costs, first of all, from the government's shoulders. It also allows people to integrate and to feel like they have some sense of family here in Canada. As Professor Dawson was saying, the process is quite intimate. The families get together. They go to doctor's appointments, etc. So, it is a very good way of making sure that people land on their feet.

As I said before in my prepared statement, refugees do not necessarily come to Canada, or come to the United States, because they have a desire to be here, or resources here, or family here. They have no choice. They are running and they have to go somewhere safe. So, when you have someone there showing you where you apply for a driver's license, where you can get English as a second language instruction, when you have a place to stay, a doctor you are referred to, or whatever, it is a lot better than just having the government sponsor someone and putting them on the street.

Chairman JOHNSON. What percent of refugees are in that program versus a government-sponsored program?

Mr. MAMANN. I would think about half—more or less half.

Ms. DAWSON. I have seen currently 10,000 of the 25,000—about half.

Chairman JOHNSON. OK. So, again, let us assume that you have 10,000. The rest will go through a government program, probably then, correct?

Ms. DAWSON. Yes.

Chairman JOHNSON. I mean, you do not have enough private sponsors to handle the 25,000 now. Mr. Harris.

Mr. HARRIS. Just as a matter of facts, it may be useful to bear in mind that the private sponsorship concept goes back to the Vietnam boat people era—and there was a great deal of demand to bring in various people. Enormous numbers of individuals were brought in, as Dr. Dawson has indicated. But, it should be remembered that these people were brought in over about a decade. So, that is a significant distinction, perhaps, from the current situation.

Chairman JOHNSON. OK. Senator Carper.

Senator CARPER. Again, thank you all for your testimony.

I was interested, Dr. Dawson, when you mentioned that your church has taken some interest in the plight of these folks. Why is that?

Is there something about your faith that suggests that you have an obligation to do this kind of thing?

Ms. DAWSON. Yes. The United Church of Canada, which is a middle-of-the-road Protestant faith—as a community, we felt that we had an obligation to be part of refugee resettlement. To be clear, I was not involved in Syrian refugee resettlement. I was working on African refugee resettlement at the time.

But, I think that it comes down to the larger sense of Canada's identity. Canada has not been perfect in its dealings with refugees. Canada turned away Jewish refugees on the MS St. Louis during World War II. Nine-hundred-and-eight people were returned to the Holocaust. Canadians looked at the images of Alan Kurdi, the little boy on the beach this summer, and said, "This is not who we are. We are a community of diversity. We are a community who accepts newcomers, and we are all newcomers—unless you are a member of a First Nations people".

Senator CARPER. Yes. Let me interrupt you.

Ms. DAWSON. Yes.

Senator CARPER. Thank you. Sometimes, in this Committee, I quote Pope Francis, who quotes Matthew 25, which says something about, "When I was a stranger in your land, did you take me in?" Does that have anything to do with the fact that your church and the people in your church have an interest in being a part of this?

Ms. DAWSON. Very much so—

Senator CARPER. Thank you.

Ms. DAWSON [continuing]. And also—

Senator CARPER. That is all you have to say.

Ms. DAWSON. Thank you.

Senator CARPER. All right. Why is Canada so interested in taking in so many people? What is it about Canada? I asked the same question—we had a Consul General from the consulate up in New York—the Canadian—and I said, "Why do you guys want to take

so many people in?” And he said, “Well, we need more people and we do not have that many people.” How many people do they have in Canada?

Ms. DAWSON. 34 million.

Senator CARPER. Yes, 34 million. But, what is that, about one-ninth of our population? So, they are interested in having more people, and, I think—so there is more of a willingness to take a look at these folks.

I want to come back to something that you said, Dr. Dawson—and something that I said, actually. If I am an ISIS-affiliated person and I am trying to get into this country and do mayhem, why would I take 2 years to get here? Why would I go through the most intrusive vetting process that exists to get here? What is the logic or rationale for doing that?

Ms. DAWSON. It seems to me that it is a very inefficient way to do it, as I mentioned. And, also, I would like to note that there is an urgency in bringing these people to Canada or to anywhere else. These are children who have not been in school for years now. These are families in crisis. If you want to radicalize young people, that is the way to do it. But, bring them to a community, put them in school, and reintegrate them into society—that is the best hedge against radicalization.

Senator CARPER. Yes. I served in the Vietnam War and had some interest in trying to normalize relations between our country and Vietnam back in the 1990s. We have a lot of Vietnamese Americans, a lot of Vietnamese, who come here and have done remarkably well in their lives and they have been great citizens. I am struck by the fact that some of the—what is it, 50,000?—people that you all took in from Southeast Asia are now serving as host families for the Syrians. Is that true?

Ms. DAWSON. Yes. Serving as host families for Syrians and leading some of the refugee programs. And, also, if you go to any small town in Saskatchewan or Manitoba, middle of nowhere—I hope you do not have to go to the doctor, but if you do, it could very well be a Vietnamese adult who arrived as a child as a boat person. The integration into Canada’s small towns has been very important.

Senator CARPER. That kind of reminds me of the Golden Rule. How do we want to treat other people? Well, the way that we would like to be treated. And, so, the Vietnamese certainly have had a piece of that.

Mr. Mandel, you were a Navy Petty Officer. I just want to thank you for your service. I did 23 years active and reserve, retired Navy Captain. We are grateful for that service as well.

Another question, if I could, for Mr. Harris and Dr. Dawson. When Canada screens refugees or other immigrants for possible ties to terrorism, my understanding is that it does not just rely on its own security holdings. Rather, as I understand it, there is a systematic consultation—this is one of the things that was asserted to me by the Consul General the other day—with U.S. officials and databases—just as the U.S. Government consults with Canadian resources when conducting its own checks. Could each of you just describe this information sharing a little bit. Mr. Harris, would you just go first, please?

Mr. HARRIS. Yes, indeed.

The cooperation and collaboration, as has been indicated, is not merely extensive, it is almost astonishing—and astonishingly successful in the context of world history. This is not hyperbole. This is absolutely the way that things are.

The challenge that we face is, of course, reality, which means that we are only as good as our databases. And, you may recall that in his October 2015 testimony before the House Judiciary Committee, the FBI Director Comey was pressed on some of these related questions and he was asked about databases—whether there were sufficient ones in the U.S. inventory—which, of course, we will, at least indirectly, from the Canadian perspective, look forward to relying on. He said, “The only thing we can query is information that we have. So, if we have no information on someone, they have never crossed our radar screen, they have never been a ripple in the pond, there will be no record of them there and so it will be challenging.”

And, on some other occasion, he went on to have pointed out that a number of people who were a serious concern, to use his expression, slipped through as Iraq war refugees, including two who were arrested on terrorism-related charges.

Senator CARPER. Mr. Harris, I am going to ask you to hold it there because I want to give Dr. Dawson a chance to respond to the same question, and then I have a real quick one for Mr. Mandel. Just very briefly, Dr. Dawson.

Ms. DAWSON. I just want to reiterate that there is an automatic check to U.S. databases—criminal, immigration, and security databases. It is not an option, it is a mandatory check and they are databases that are established and maintained by the United States. Canada does not want anyone—any incident in the United States—to be linked to a lack of vigilance on Canada’s part.

Senator CARPER. Good. Thank you.

Mr. Mandel, one last, quick question. From your perspective, as a Border Patrol Agent on the Northern Border, how extensive is the cooperation and information sharing between our two governments, please?

Mr. MANDEL. With the task forces our agents are assigned to, the relationship has just been fantastic. Good feedback. We actually have been task forced with an International Border Enforcement Team (IBET). That was successful. The relationship has been good, outside what we have received on the Southern Border.

Senator CARPER. OK. I would just say, as one Navy guy to another Navy guy—there is a friendly rivalry between Army-Navy in this country, as you know, in football games and stuff like that, and I always say to my Army friends, “Well, we may wear different uniforms, but we are on the same team.” And, I think that with the Canadians, we may wear different uniforms, but clearly, we are on the same team.

Mr. MANDEL. Absolutely.

Chairman JOHNSON. Senator Booker.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR BOOKER

Senator BOOKER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I really appreciate, Dr. Dawson, what you were saying. I mean, there are about 4 million refugees between Jordan, Syria, and Leb-

anon. 50 percent of them are about 18 years old or younger. These camps can be breeding grounds for radicalism. Just imagine a Middle East with that many young people who are not connected to society—not grounded—and what kind of radicalization could happen over their lifetimes and what kinds of problems they could have. This resettlement of those refugees into communities that are nurturing and supportive can actually be a preemptive strike against future radicals. So, I really appreciate you bringing that up.

And, I just want to clarify. Perhaps, Dr. Dawson, I can start with you. There are a lot of people that keep describing the Canadian resettlement process or vetting process as expedited, and I am wondering if that is an appropriate term to use—that somehow you guys are fast-tracking people or cutting corners when it comes to the security of your nation as well as, obviously, your partner across your Southern Border, the United States.

Ms. DAWSON. Thank you, Senator. I agree, “expedited” is the wrong word. Enhanced or expanded—absolutely. But, no corners are being cut. All of the resources that are necessary, as I understand it, are being deployed to ensure that every level of scrutiny and verification has been met. Are they bringing resources from other areas of government? Absolutely. Maybe my taxes will not get processed this year. But, I know that they are paying appropriate attention to Syrian refugee review.

Senator BOOKER. Mr. Mamann, do you agree with that? Is this expedited or—

Mr. MAMANN. It is going very fast. I think that we can talk about what exact word describes it, but we are asking people to do things that they have never done before and in a timeframe that they have never used before. As I said before, I have worked with CBSA, RCMP, and CSIS—dealt with all of those agencies. They are good men and women. They are not going to let somebody in because it is 5 o'clock and they want to go home. I think that they are going to do their jobs.

But, when you do that kind of work under that kind of pressure—keep in mind that we have a Prime Minister who just got elected and this was the crown jewel of his election platform—this is a mark that he has to hit and these guys, these men and women, are going to be under tremendous pressure to get the job done, because the leader of the country has asked them to do a job and they are going to do their best to do that.

My concern is that when people are fatigued or when they are tired, they are not as effective—and that is something that you have asked me to talk about, security implications. That would be, in my opinion, the security implication—not that our guys are going to cut corners. I do not think that they are going to do that. They are just going to be tired.

Senator BOOKER. Dr. Dawson, are you worried about fatigue?

Ms. DAWSON. What I am most encouraged by is that, even though this is a new government, they have some really senior people in Cabinet that they have assigned to the task. The Minister of Immigration and Refugees and Citizenship, John McCallum, he is a real veteran in government. Stephane Dion, the Minister of Global Affairs Canada and the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Ralph Goodale, these are people who have

been around for many years. They know what the right thing to do is and how to do it.

Senator BOOKER. And, so, Dr. Dawson, you were talking about the databases that are being queried. Are you concerned that there is some database sharing that is not going on, that there is any cooperation between our two countries, when it comes to vetting, that is not happening that should be happening? Do you have any concerns in those areas?

Ms. DAWSON. I do not have concerns, but I always would like to see an expansion of the level of cooperation and expansion of our interoperability as well as greater investment to increase security and vigilance.

Senator BOOKER. What does that mean, the expansion of our interoperability? Is there something that we should be concerned with in the Senate, in terms of funding or helping to facilitate that?

Ms. DAWSON. Sure. Well, right now, we are looking at expanding a pre-clearance program, which would move more vetting out to air, marine, and rail. With congressional support for that and Canadian Parliamentary support for that, that means, basically, that there are U.S. eyes on every Canadian port, and I think that that is important.

Senator BOOKER. That is great.

And, finally, Mr. Mandel, thank you for your service. I am really grateful for what you do for our country. And you have a haircut much better than Senator Tester, so I appreciate that, as well. [Laughter.]

Mr. MANDEL. Thank you.

Senator TESTER. Better than yours. [Laughter.]

Senator BOOKER. You are just jealous, Tester, and wait your turn. [Laughter.]

So, I just want to know, how critical are a lot of the new technologies? We have such a low number of manpower, person-power, on our Northern Border, and I really want to know about what investments you think are critical for us to be making to better secure our Northern Border, which, if you are trying to run anything—from drugs to sex trafficking—this is something that really concerns me overall. I do not think that we are making the investment. So much attention is on our Southern Border. Could you give me, in the less than 2 minutes that I have left, some of your ideas about the things that Congress should be really focusing on to secure the Northern Border?

Mr. MANDEL. Augmentation of more agents. Personnel always helps. The tools and intel to use the tools. For example, we have a radar up in Buffalo that was just implemented. It pings off of waves, even, and it is just a standard operating procedure (SOP). It is just sitting. We need it—and it can track something, but it has to be told to track it and there is no intel as of right now.

So, to me, I think that the answer would be the augmentation of the agents—how we are implemented. I think that more of us should be in plain clothes. We should be doing source, building sources—having force multipliers, reaching out to community, and starting community programs, which would, in turn, give us intel to use our tools, to use the sensors, to use the radar, and to use

our manpower. Get those intel agents to build sources, and hopefully we can be proactive instead of reactive.

Senator BOOKER. So, this lack of adequate manpower and some of the inadequate technology that you are talking about, as an American, what are your fears? What are your concerns that this could be leading to as we are speaking right now?

Mr. MANDEL. My worst fear is a terrorist attack. I mean, I wake up, I wake up at night about it. After incidents that I have seen in San Bernadino and in France, it rocks me, and it is my job. I put the uniform on every day. I feel the weight of it. I feel the responsibility of it. That is my nightmare. I have a family and I have family and relatives across the United States. It would impact me greatly.

Senator BOOKER. All right. Sir, thank you very much for your testimony.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman JOHNSON. Senator Ayotte.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR AYOTTE

Senator AYOTTE. Thank you.

Mr. Harris, I wanted to ask you—I think that the testimony here today, and my understanding of it, is that this process is being significantly expedited to admit these refugees. Do you believe that there are some risks that are created when you rush this kind of program, because what I have seen in terms of some of the quotes of some individuals who are current Canadian intelligence officials—they are saying that there is a clear risk given the pace at which security screeners would have to work to interview, select, and process such high volumes of applicants. And then I have heard other quotes saying that that could create vulnerabilities. Our own intelligence officials in the United States have expressed concerns about what information we have to be able to vet. So, I wanted to ask you about some of the risks here.

Mr. HARRIS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think that the risks are manifest, as has been indicated, and, of course, as many experts and many of those who have been explicitly involved in the exercise have reflected—I believe that there were remarks made by a Mr. Gerry Van Kessel that have been published—and he had significant responsibility on the Canadian immigration side of things and was concerned about the speed of things and some of the priorities and influences that could, in theory, be brought to bear. There is the issue of efficacy, as my colleague, Mr. Mamann has indicated. When there are so many people who are so rushed and might, rightly or wrongly, feel under pressure, things can happen.

And, it may be useful, in this context, to reflect on work, not so much by a security specialist, as by an economist. They do have their uses, we are told. Irwin Stelzer, who has actually done an appraisal on the generous assumption that the assessment, for security purposes, of people coming in might be, for the sake of argument, 99 percent accurate and reliable. What he said, reflecting on the American context of a 10,000 person intake from Syria, was that, if “only one percent of the 10,000 entrants, or 100 applicants, will have slipped through the vetting net,” then it might be estimated that the—I think that he was saying that the units that at-

tacked France in November each had about 8 to 20 people on them—involved in them.

And, so, if you work on that assumption, you would have, for a group of 10,000, at just a 1-percent failure rate, between 5 and 8 terrorist units, each capable of doing to one of our cities what they had done to Paris. And if you then multiply those numbers to the 25,000 contemplated in Canada, you could be looking at between 12 and 20 terrorist units of the very kind that tore apart portions of Paris earlier this year.

If I may add to this a related humanitarian consideration. It has been said that Canada, of course, is rightly proud of its traditions with regard to assisting people. However, the respected Center for Immigration Studies in Washington has made a very interesting point. It says that, now, again, using the United States context, and I quote, “For what it costs to resettle one Middle Eastern refugee in the United States for 5 years, about 12 refugees can be helped in the Middle East for 5 years, or 61 refugees can be helped for 1 year.”

And when one considers some of the difficulties that one might be dealing with worldwide in the refugee crisis that, depending on definitions, could extend to 60 million people on the planet, it is even theoretically possible, I suppose, that many of those other refugees who will not have the privileged treatment that the relative few going to Canada might have, might expect something akin to an apology from us for not diverting funds from certain Canadian programs to international assistance. That, in turn, is relevant in security terms because, of course, that kind of diversion of funds would allow for more concentration on the security side in Canada and, indeed, would allow funds for security per se in Canada.

Senator AYOTTE. Thank you.

I wanted to also follow up on the issue—I represent New Hampshire and we are a State, of course, that borders Canada. By the way, we do a lot of important economic trade with Canada. I trace my own roots to Canada a bit, with “Ayotte” as a last name.

So, I wanted to ask about this issue in the context of the border. With tens of thousands of newly arrived individuals, what are ways that Canada can ensure that there is close information sharing and that refugees are not able to cross the border into the United States? Do you think that there are going to have to be any changes made there on the U.S.-Canadian border? Is that going to put some more pressure on local agents there, who, I know, work very hard? So, I wanted to get your thoughts on that.

Mr. MANDEL. I would like to venture that we need to get communication—more communication. I talked about intel earlier. There is intel, but there could be more. And, it will not take much—one or two to come across, sneak across, and do a lot of damage. So, I think that the communication lines need to be bolstered. The relationships that we have have been good, but I think that everything could just improve—and possibly more task forces, as well.

Senator AYOTTE. So, it is something that we are going to have to focus on and—

Mr. MANDEL. Absolutely. The awareness of what is going on there, the daily happenings—I think that our agents need to be

aware of the intel—keeping the agents up to date, up to speed on what is going on.

Senator AYOTTE. Well, that is helpful, because Senator Heitkamp and I have a bill that is focused on our Northern Border and making sure that we are focusing on ensuring that that border gets attention and that we are properly ensuring that that communication exists. So, we passed it out of this Committee. I am hoping that we might get that passed in the Senate this year, and so I appreciate all of you being here today.

Thank you, Chairman.

Chairman JOHNSON. Thank you, Senator Ayotte. Senator Tester.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR TESTER

Senator TESTER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And, Senator Ayotte, when you said “bit,” it was a dead giveaway with the Canadian connection, I have to say. [Laughter.]

Senator TESTER. I want to thank you folks for being here today. I very much appreciate your testimony and I very much appreciate our friends to the north. Coming from Montana with a 550-mile border, I can tell you that I often have more connections with the folks in Alberta and Saskatchewan than I do with the folks east of the Mississippi. So, we thank you very much for living in a great country, because, quite frankly, I have a great appreciation for Canada.

I do not know if any of you can answer this question, but we talked about 300 agents on the Northern Border, from a U.S. perspective, at any one moment in time. Can you tell me how many agents Canada has on its Southern Border at any one moment in time? Yes.

Mr. MANDEL. From personal experience, once in a while we have someone who is running out of status in the United States who will go across the border.

Senator TESTER. Yes.

Mr. MANDEL. Canoe, raft, or swim across the International Railroad Bridge and the reaction time has been good. It could be better, but they do not have anybody there. Usually, the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP)——

Senator TESTER. Yes.

Mr. MANDEL [continuing]. Get over. But, sometimes, the time could be——

Senator TESTER. But, what about the number of agents serving on that Southern Border? Do we have any idea how much Canada invests in that?

Mr. MAMANN. I would suspect it is a lot less than that.

Senator TESTER. Less than 300?

Mr. MAMANN. I would think so.

Senator TESTER. No kidding? That is surprising. Well, that is good to know.

Mr. Mandel, you talked about how, in March, Canada was going to institute some changes to their Visa Waiver Program. Could you go through that, again, briefly, because I just want to catch it again, because you had it in your remarks. What are they going to do?

Mr. MANDEL. The Electronic Travel Authorization (ETA). So, electronically, you have your application prior to coming in and during your travels. So, hopefully, that would decrease the amount of risk.

Senator TESTER. OK, and you said that that is a first step, correct?

Mr. MANDEL. Yes.

Senator TESTER. So, tell me what they are going to do come March compared to what we do with the visa waivers. Is it as good a system? A better system? A worse system?

Mr. MANDEL. I think it—

Senator TESTER. Go ahead.

Mr. MANDEL. Comprehensive—it lacks comprehension. For instance, we have different databases that I use daily. They do not tell me when someone overstayed a visa. So, it does not give a red flag and I need to go find them or—

Senator TESTER. Right.

Mr. MANDEL [continuing]. Keep track of their accountability. It just goes, and they have overstayed. They are doing something nefarious. It does not alert me. So, I think that the lack of comprehensiveness is the issue at hand.

Senator TESTER. From our side?

Mr. MANDEL. Yes.

Senator TESTER. OK.

Mr. MANDEL. Yes, and working with Customs and Border Protection—

Senator TESTER. I know that it would be unfair for you to talk about—and, by the way, we need to deal with that to make sure that those database red flags come up.

Dr. Dawson, can you talk about it from the Canadian side, as far as the visa waiver program and how concerned you would be about that and also whether Canada has taken the proper steps to ensure security through that program?

Ms. DAWSON. From my perspective, Canada has been working hard to ensure that it can line up its programs with that of the United States. So, for example, the Electronic Travel Authorization (eTA) program—

Senator TESTER. Right.

Ms. DAWSON [continuing]. That is a really good addition for Canada. I know that in the context of Mexico, Canada had a very strict visa requirement—

Senator TESTER. OK. Good.

Ms. DAWSON [continuing]. And now they are recognizing a U.S. visa plus the eTA for Mexicans coming to Canada.

Senator TESTER. OK. Mr. Harris brought up the point that, when we do this vetting, if there are no records, how do we know that the wife is really the wife and that the kids are really the kids. Could you respond to that? In the case where there are no records—

Ms. DAWSON. Sure. All I can respond to is that they are already dealing with very low-risk demographic groups, women and children. They are dealing with folks who have been in refugee camps for a long period of time. So, these are the people least likely to

be radicalized. You can never eliminate risk, but you can use sound risk-assessment models.

Senator TESTER. OK. Thank you.

And, we will stay with you, Dr. Dawson. Can you tell me, and “expedited” may be the wrong word, but can you tell me how much time is being reduced? There were figures thrown out of 55 to 65 months to begin with, and then inland was 2-plus years. What are we looking at?

Ms. DAWSON. I am afraid that I cannot answer that question.

Senator TESTER. OK. Can you, Mr. Mamann?

Mr. MAMANN. Yes. The process for which, Senator?

Senator TESTER. Well, for vetting the refugees.

Mr. MAMANN. The current refugees?

Senator TESTER. Yes, the 25,000 that are going to be brought in.

Mr. MAMANN. So, here is the situation. By December 31, we had 6,000 come in. The target was 25,000.

Senator TESTER. Right.

Mr. MAMANN. They did not go from start to finish. Those are people who were sitting around waiting for the finalization of their applications. So, we are just talking about the very last little piece of it.

Senator TESTER. OK.

Mr. MAMANN. So, that is how we got 6,000 in.

Senator TESTER. OK.

Mr. MAMANN. But, you could not draw from that the conclusion—

Senator TESTER. Right.

Mr. MAMANN [continuing]. That it only took 57 days—

Senator TESTER. Got you.

Mr. MAMANN [continuing]. To do from start to finish. So, now, the tough part is going to begin, because all of the easy cases, the ones that were sort of 90 percent of the way down the pipe, have already been processed and they brought them in as quickly as we can. Now, the question is, the remainder are people who may or may not have even been selected—

Senator TESTER. OK.

Mr. MAMANN [continuing]. Or had the background checks started.

Senator TESTER. Got you.

Mr. MAMANN. So, we really do not know what it is going to be.

Senator TESTER. All right. Sounds good.

Just one quick comment for Mr. Mandel on the points that you mentioned that we need on the Northern Border. I agree 100 percent. I think that the interoperability portion is also one that we need to include in that. But, we need more agents. We need radar. We need more technology. We need more cooperation with local government agencies and we need community programs. And, I appreciate you saying that because you took the words right out of my mouth, so thank you.

I would just say one thing in closing. First of all, thank you all for your testimony. We invaded Iraq some 15 years ago looking for weapons of mass destruction. The result of that has been, quite frankly, a Middle East that is a mess. These refugees do not have any homes. They have been destroyed. And, I especially want to

bring up the point that Dr. Dawson made, and that is that the best way to radicalize people is to not reintegrate them into a society. We have an obligation to figure out how to do this and how to do this right for the safety of this country, but we cannot ignore it, because if we do, we are not doing anybody any favors on this earth.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman JOHNSON. Senator Portman.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR PORTMAN

Senator PORTMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I do not have quite the border that Senator Tester has with Canada. We have 149 miles. We are proud of that. And we have a great relationship with Canada, and I agree with what Senator Tester said about the need for us to do more to protect that border.

Our 149-mile border, as you know, is a water border, and so it is a little different than a land border, but it has substantial risks. Right now, the way in, which you help to enforce, is, I think, problematic. If you come across Lake Erie with a boat, you are supposed to enter into what is called the Outlying Area Reporting System (OARS). You dial into one of eight OARS landing locations that are in Ohio.

And, I have talked to your colleagues, Mr. Mandel. They cannot tell you how many people actually comply with that or not. We have thousands of places for people to dock, and then we also have people that can just dock in shallow water. So, only having eight makes it hard.

They are also able to fill out what is called the Form I-68, which provides information and then is filed. The problem with both of these is that you do not capture the people who are on board the boat, either. So, the OARS system, you do not know if the person that calls in is reporting the crew or the content of the vessel.

So, it is riddled with holes and one way that you check it is through air assets—and I am told that your CBP air assets have been reduced in the Lake Erie region, so it is harder to monitor.

So, again, you talked about only having roughly 10 percent, as I heard your numbers, of agents on the Northern Border compared to the Southern Border, even though the Northern Border is about twice as large. And, I would just say that, even in Ohio, where you would think that you have this great body of water to deter people from coming over, we have a lot of traffic back and forth—commercial traffic, recreational traffic, and so on. It is very difficult for us to be able to monitor that.

So, part of my question to you, Agent Mandel, if you do not mind and if you have any comments on this, are the ways in which we could do a better job of ensuring that we do not have a problem coming across our water. Do you think that the I-68 Form and the OARS System can be improved? And, do you have any comments about what we face in Ohio?

Mr. MANDEL. The difference between the Southern Border and the Northern Border, to start, is that the Northern Border, with the Great Lakes and Niagara Falls—the border is the attraction—so we get a lot of clutter, as you spoke of. The reporting—they come over with visas, using the Visa Waiver Program, and there is so

much clutter. So, if you have a lookout, you are doing some surveillance, and you also want to consider those people being reporters and force multipliers—they see something, they say something.

So, I weigh out my suspicion level, basically, versus aggravating someone and making someone not report something and making law enforcement an enemy again. So, I weigh all of these things out.

I think that the communication could always improve between the Canadians and us. It is fantastic. But, the clutter and the amount of people that are there—it is very hard to track. So, I think that the answer is the infrastructure, the radar, and more augmentation of agents, our posture changing into more intel-related. These organizations communicated through social media—encrypted. They get on video game sites and talk while playing video games. It is a different animal than it is down South, where they are making money up North—even down South. But, up North, with these possibly radicalized people, they are not looking to make money. They are interested in creating terror and chaos.

Senator PORTMAN. I think that what you are describing—

Mr. MANDEL. I hope that I answered your question, sir.

Senator PORTMAN. No, it is very helpful. You are giving some context to it. And, you are right. A lot of those, let us say, visa waiver holders, visa holders, or tourists who would come, as you say, to an attraction like Lake Erie—or you mentioned Niagara Falls—so, that makes it even more challenging for you. I mean, you just laid out the huge challenge that we have. And, I am for more resources along the border. I think that that would be helpful. But, as you are saying, even with that, it is going to be very difficult for us to know what is going on on this vast border—even our water border.

And, I guess that that gets to the point that, if Canada does have a more aggressive refugee program and they are accelerating that program—or not doing the vetting that we might do—that puts us more at risk. That is sort of our point here this morning and why we wanted to have this hearing.

The one thing that we have not talked about as much, Mr. Chairman, and I know that this is not a hearing to talk about the international side, but it is all relevant, I think, and Mr. Harris, I think, made a really good point. I never heard the economic analysis before. He said that you can support one refugee here—and I would assume that that would be true for Canada or the United States, and that the resources are probably similar—Mr. Mamann can tell us that, if they are similar—versus 12 refugees overseas by supporting international efforts on refugee resettlement.

And, I have supported this “no fly” zone, for instance, in Syria. Someone talked earlier about the 4 million refugees. We are talking about 4 million people fleeing their homes and we are talking about how we can come up with a security system to be able to deal with 10,000 in the United States or 25,000 in Canada. So, it is a drop in the bucket. And, could you help much more internationally? Canada does help already. The United States does help. Probably per capita, Dr. Dawson, Canada is at the top of the list, I would think. They have been traditionally.

But, I think that this is something that we have to focus on more. How do you resettle people in these other countries in the region, Arab countries, in an appropriate way? How do you ensure that these refugee camps are not places where you are spawning more radicalization?

And, finally, how do you keep them at home? There was an interview not long ago. They interviewed one of these refugees from Syria and said, "Would you rather go to the United States or Europe?" hoping that they could figure out where this person would rather go. And, of course, the answer was, "I would rather go home." I mean, these people do not want to leave their homes, and they—I do not know, Mr. Mamann or Dr. Dawson, you might want to comment on that, but how do you keep people from this radicalized environment by getting them resettled overseas? I think that that is the bigger challenge that we face, if you really want to help the people who we are talking about today.

Mr. MAMANN, do you have any thoughts on that?

Mr. MAMANN. A very small percentage of the applicants that were contacted by Canadian officials actually took up the offer to come to Canada. It is only about, when the poll was taken, maybe 6 percent. You are absolutely right. People do not necessarily want to leave their home, their culture, the sounds of their home, the food of their home, and the language of their home. It is not their first choice.

With respect to the economic argument that my friend, Mr. Harris, was talking about, this began with a \$100 million pledge to help a certain group of people. We are now talking about a \$1.2 billion project—and we have not even ramped up. We have no idea where that is going to go.

So, if you were to ask me, would that money, as Mr. Harris suggested, be better used overseas to help even more people to stay where they want to be, in the regions that they want to be in, to find a regional solution, to provide proper shelter, proper schooling, and proper education with our friends in the United States—and put that together, work together, and eliminate whatever ideological risks—terrorist risks—that Officer Mandel talked about, there is a discussion to be had there. I am not sure if that is the way that we should go or the way that we want to go, but that is a discussion that I think needs to take place as allies and partners.

Senator PORTMAN. Thank you for the indulgence, Mr. Chairman. I am over my time, but thank you all for your testimony. I appreciate it. And thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman JOHNSON. And again, I agree. That is a very important point. Take a look at that \$1.2 billion. Another point we are not really making—

Mr. MAMANN. Well, that is Canadian. I am not sure it is worth much up here, but— [Laughter.]

Chairman JOHNSON. It is a lot of money.

Senator HEITKAMP. Take it times 70. [Laughter.]

Chairman JOHNSON. It is a lot of money.

The other point that we really do not make enough is that Sharia law is not particularly compatible with Western democracies, and part of assimilation is coming in and assimilating into our rule of

law. And, that is, again—it is kind of something that is never really mentioned, but it is a real problem. Senator Heitkamp.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR HEITKAMP

Senator HEITKAMP. I frequently get mistaken for a Canadian, so you will recognize the accent. No mistake there. North Dakota has a long border. We have the Grand Forks District, which houses one of the regional operations. In a previous life, I was the Attorney General (AG) responsible for running something called the Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI), which held, on a regular basis, intel sessions all across the State of North Dakota on the topic of the border. Royal Canadian Mounties were invited, as were the local Canadian officials, border security, and Border Patrol. So, I want to give a fairly accurate picture of the great collaboration and work that is being done on the Northern Border.

But, with that said, we have taken our eyes off of the Northern Border. It was painful during the discussion on immigration reform, when I tried to take some of the discussion to the Northern Border, only to be shut down in terms of resources. This is why Senator Ayotte and I got together to, basically, introduce a piece of legislation to let us look at what the challenges are.

Now, I have just a couple of questions. The refugees that come get a permanent resident card, correct? And that permanent resident card, if you are going to come into the United States, would require a visa application. Is that correct, Dr. Dawson?

Ms. DAWSON. That is correct.

Senator HEITKAMP. So, on the POE, if, in fact, that is a Syrian or a refugee from a country that we think may have radicalized that person before they entered the Canadian refugee system, that person would not be given entry into the United States unless they went through the visa application process.

Ms. DAWSON. That is correct. And it would be U.S. officials that would make that determination.

Senator HEITKAMP. That is correct. So, they would look at any information. And, so, as we are talking about visa waivers—and, obviously, one of the great security gaps that we found is the Visa Waiver Program. Every panelist who has come before us and talked about refugee radicalization has basically said that refugee resettlement is a process that is long enough and is robust enough that it is not something somebody who wants to do harm would do. They would find a way to get in under a visa waiver program. And, so, it is good to hear that the Canadian officials are now undertaking the same kind of scrutiny that we are looking at.

So, Dr. Dawson, can you tell me what the equivalent to the Visa Waiver Program is in Canada? What are you guys doing? You, obviously, are part of our Visa Waiver Program, one of 51 countries. Let us say that you have somebody who wanted to come to study in Canada—or said that they wanted to—or came on a wish to be a tourist. They qualified, if they are French, for a visa waiver, right?—or to not require a visa? What are you doing now that would be a comparable increased security provision like we did with the Visa Waiver Program?

Ms. DAWSON. I am going to defer that question to possibly Mr. Mamann as an expert in—

Mr. MAMANN. If you are a French national or a British national, you just hop on a plane and come to Canada.

Senator HEITKAMP. And you guys have not changed that system?

Mr. MAMANN. No. We have a list of countries that are visa exempt. Those are usually friendly countries, countries that are more developed countries, and richer countries, because we make the assumption that a person coming from that country is welcome and is going to return to that country because there is no economic reason to overstay and work here.

Senator HEITKAMP. And that is one of the concerns that I have. I mean, let us take the refugees—same scenario here. Who is more likely to want to come to Canada and then find access to the United States, somebody who comes in as a refugee or somebody who came in with a visa waiver?

Mr. MAMANN. Right.

Senator HEITKAMP. And, is Canada looking at doing something like we did, which is say that, if you have been in Syria or if you have been in Iraq within the last 5 years, you actually have to apply for a visa?

Mr. MAMANN. Right. So, we do not really have that system. The eTA system, from what I understand, is going to be—of course, I have no experience with it because it has not been implemented yet—

Senator HEITKAMP. It is new, yes.

Mr. MAMANN [continuing]. But the idea is that, when a person comes to the border, like when I used to work at the airport, you are seeing them for the first time. You are sort of caught off-guard. You look at their passport, you do whatever checking that you can do, and you have to move them along. I mean, you cannot keep people held up all day.

So, the eTA program is going to require you to register online, and hopefully, that will give the Canadian authorities some advanced notice that this person is coming. Maybe we will check with our American partners and say, “Hey, do you have anything on this?” Maybe it will happen electronically or manually. I am not sure.

Senator HEITKAMP. We will probably follow up with the Canadian officials, because “maybe” is not good enough for me.

Mr. MAMANN. Right.

Senator HEITKAMP. I want to know exactly what that means. Is that just a step that you think will be a deterrent to somebody coming because they think that they might get caught? Or is that something where you are actually going to scrutinize the people who come to the country?

Mr. MAMANN. I do not think that it is going to be a deterrent. It is going to give you a little bit more time to think things through. Why would I be deterred? I will go on my computer. I will put in my name and my passport number—

Senator HEITKAMP. Well, but if you think that you have a record somewhere where, actually, they could trace back your bad behavior—

Mr. MAMANN. Right. But, most people—if you take a look at even the 9/11 situation—no one had negative records.

Senator HEITKAMP. Right.

Mr. MAMANN. I believe that people who have negative records are less of a threat to a company for a major terrorist attack because they are easily detectable. A person who has a clean record, that is the person that—

Senator HEITKAMP. Who is going to be—

Mr. MAMANN [continuing]. Who is going to create problems.

Senator HEITKAMP. No, I get that. I am just saying that that is one of the fallacies of all of this, that we are going to know for sure whether, in fact, somebody is intending to do harm, basically, by looking at biometrics, and basically, looking at all of the advanced data. And, so, that is our concern.

And then the point becomes, what happens at the border? I mean, I sat down with a county sheriff from Minnesota, the same situation that Senator Ayotte was telling me is in New Hampshire. It is wooded. Anyone can walk across the border. I flew Senator Carper up to the Northern Border and people farm around the border lines. I mean, it is very porous.

But, I also want to make one final point, which is that, because we are dealing with a neighbor that is trusted, that culturally is similar, it is not similar, in that way, to the Southern Border. We have an opportunity to double force by working closely with our Canadian neighbors. We are doing that in Portal. We are doing that in Grand Forks and Pembina. But we need more people and we need more resources if we are going to have situational awareness on the border.

And, so, thank you for your work. You are welcome any time in our district. Officer Mandel, we would love to put you in Portal. If you do not know where that is, it is next to Montana. [Laughter.]

Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman JOHNSON. And then, he could just walk across the border. [Laughter.]

Thank you, Senator Heitkamp.

Senator Carper has one question that hopefully he can ask quickly and that can be answered quickly. And then, I will give each of you about 30 seconds for just a final comment before we close out the hearing. Senator Carper.

Senator CARPER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and again, our thanks to each one of you for joining us today and for your testimony.

The Chairman and I, as well as some other colleagues, had breakfast yesterday with Secretary Jeh Johnson, and among the things that he reviewed with us were the priorities of the Department—the priorities of the Administration—and their ask in terms of authorizing legislation and appropriations. One of the initiatives that we talked about was a community partnership countering violent extremism (CVE), and it would be an agency within the Department of Homeland Security whose job it would be to work out—to reach out, particularly, to the Muslim community in this country, the faith-based organizations, through NGOs, and others to try to find ways to partner—not locking people up, but actually to partner and encourage people not to become radicalized, especially young people. They would help develop almost like a messaging campaign for young people who have no interest in being

radicalized, a message to those who might be sensitive to that or attracted to that.

Doctor, when you talked to us about how these families actually adopt and welcome families, that is a great way to assimilate people into a country and make them feel comfortable and part of a community. I do not know how much of that we do in this country. I think that that is a good thing that we could learn, maybe, from you. If we are not doing enough, we could do more.

Do you have any thoughts or comments on this idea, the idea of a community partnership countering violent extremism as a unit within the Department of Homeland Security? You or anybody else, please comment just very briefly.

Ms. DAWSON. I think that it is an excellent idea. I think that it begins at the community level. We have talked about faith-based communities. The Christian, Muslim, and Jewish communities in Canada have been very active in this. New technologies and young people have all contributed to making it easier and better in Canada.

Senator CARPER. Mr. Mandel, last comment.

Mr. MANDEL. Yes. I am actually one of the instructors at the Citizens Academy up in Buffalo, and we are thinking about an explorer program, as well. I recently went to a mosque and we brought ourselves, CBP, and the Office of Air and Marine Operations (AMO). It was a fantastic experience. It went well.

Knowledge and getting to know each other—I was over in the Middle East, in Bahrain, being a gate guard with Middle Easterners. It just comes down to being good people and getting to know each other. Here, we are on the same team and on the same side. It builds tolerance.

Senator CARPER. OK. Thank you.

Mr. MANDEL. And understanding.

Senator CARPER. Yes. Thank you both.

Chairman JOHNSON. Thank you again.

Briefly, a final comment in 30 seconds. Mr. Mamann, do you have a closing comment?

Mr. MAMANN. Sure. We started off, Senator Johnson, by talking about an ideology. We were talking about radical Islam. Ideology is not something that you can stop at a border. I think that we really need to rethink this whole idea of how you fight an ideology. You can go on the Internet and pick up an ideology without ever crossing a border.

An undue emphasis on building walls and visa requirements is not going to stop that. You can grow this ideology at home. You can transmit it via the Internet. You are going to have to develop more modern tools than just issuing visas, because visas—getting no negative hits on a background check does not tell you anything about what is in someone's mind. So, you need to rethink how to approach this thing.

Chairman JOHNSON. It is a long-term, complex problem. Mr. Harris.

Mr. HARRIS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would suggest that it is time for us, in Canada, to really revisit our immigration and refugee numbers, at large, so that we can ensure that we have the kinds of integration that really will count. I work very closely with

any number of Canadian Muslims, including through the Council for Muslims Facing Tomorrow. I am on their advisory board, though I do not speak for them.

And members of that organization have counseled enthusiasm and encouragement on the idea of outreach, but also a great caution to media, to politicians, and to police and security to do their due diligence, because there have been some signal failures in Canada, as in the United States, where undesirable organizations have been able to have legitimacy conferred upon them through their being beneficiaries of outreach.

So, I would simply offer that caution and the reminder that, of course, Canada and the U.S. have the closest imaginable relationship where security—and not just security—is concerned, and it has been a very successful one. One expects it to continue.

Chairman JOHNSON. Agent Mandel.

Mr. MANDEL. I have been to Canada countless times. I grew up in Buffalo—born and raised—and across the border, and I have been up through Toronto. We plan on going up to Montreal this summer, my wife and I. I have had a long relationship with Canada. I absolutely love the country. I hate to see anything horrible happen on either side.

I think that the Syrians—if there is a threat that comes out of there—it is just the tip of the iceberg, as compared to the criminal element that is around that could radicalize them—or in the United States, as well. So, personally, I hate to see anything happen across our border—our shared border.

Chairman JOHNSON. Dr. Dawson.

Ms. DAWSON. Without being cute, the United States is more of a risk to Canada than Canada is to the United States. The only way to get into Canada is across the Atlantic or the Pacific Ocean or across the Pole. So, while the border will continue to be porous because of necessary geography, we really need to work together—Canada and the United States—to ensure that our shared space is defended and secured. And please, in your endeavors, make Canada your partner in this work.

Chairman JOHNSON. OK. Again, I want to thank all of the witnesses for your time and testimony, and for your thoughtful answers to our questions. Again, I think that we have kind of laid out a reality here, which is important.

The hearing record will remain open for 15 days, until February 18 at 5 p.m. for the submission of statements and questions for the record.

This hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:41 a.m., the Committee was adjourned.]

A P P E N D I X

**Chairman Johnson Opening Statement
“Canada’s Fast-Track Refugee Plan: Unanswered Questions and Implications for U.S.
National Security”**

Wednesday, February 3, 2016

As submitted for the record:

Good morning and welcome.

We have convened this hearing to learn more about Canada’s plan to resettle 25,000 Syrian refugees by the end of February 2016 and to better understand the implications of this ambitious effort for U.S. national security.

From 2005 to 2014, the Canadian government, on average, resettled around 20,000 total refugees each year. During its federal election last year, admitting more Syrian refugees became a campaign issue, with Justin Trudeau, now the prime minister, pledging to admit 25,000 Syrian refugees to Canada by year’s end. Despite concerns from numerous security experts and the international organizations involved in the resettlement process, Prime Minister Trudeau continues moving forward to meet this self-imposed deadline, which has now been delayed slightly, to the end of this month.

In November, we examined the U.S. Refugee Resettlement Program to understand how the United States plans to bring in an additional 10,000 Syrian refugees by the end of fiscal year 2016. At that hearing, we learned that it takes 18 to 24 months to vet each refugee and that many are not cleared by our vetting process. We also learned that information necessary to fully vet Syrian refugees is far from complete, creating even greater concern regarding Canada’s most recent plan to resettle 25,000 Syrian refugees in a much shorter time.

In March and April 2015, this committee heard testimony from various security and law enforcement experts regarding the porous nature of the U.S.-Canada border. Specifically, witnesses testified that people who get into Canada most likely will be able to enter the United States. For these reasons, our hearing today seeks to understand the implications of Canada’s expedited security screening as it relates to U.S. national security interests.

While it is important to assist those in need of protection, we must ensure that we and our northern neighbor do not circumvent the security checks that are in place. We also must understand shortcomings in the current vetting process. At this committee’s annual hearing to assess threats to the homeland, National Counterterrorism Center Director Nick Rasmussen noted that “when you screen and vet, you screen and vet against available intelligence holdings” and that “the intelligence picture we have of [the Syrian] conflict zone is not as rich as we would like it to be.” Therefore, while both the United States and Canada may have a system that ensures that all databases are reviewed during the vetting process, you can only review against the information you have.

I thank all the witnesses, some of whom have traveled from Canada, to shed light on this serious matter, and I look forward to your testimony.

Statement of Ranking Member Tom Carper
“Canada’s Fast-Track Refugee Plan: Unanswered Questions and Implications for U.S.
National Security”

Wednesday, February 3, 2016

As prepared for delivery:

In November, this committee held a hearing on our country’s ability to screen Syrian refugees. At the time, there was great unease over the Syrian refugee population and the security risks some believed they might pose.

We learned a lot at that hearing.

We learned that the screening for refugees takes place wholly overseas before the refugee ever sets foot on U.S. soil.

We learned that the United Nations High Commission on Refugees winnows down the list of potential refugees long before the United States ever considers a single application.

We learned that once we receive a list of pre-screened refugees from the United Nations, the State Department and the Department of Homeland Security still conduct their own extensive vetting. This vetting includes biometric and biographic checks, health checks and in-person interviews conducted by immigration analysts trained to spot fraud.

We also learned that refugees are consistently vetted against the full repository of U.S. national security databases.

And we learned that our program focuses on the most vulnerable refugees, mostly children and families. It is no wonder that the security experts who testified before our committee said the refugee resettlement program is probably the last way a potential terrorist would try to come to our country.

Today, we will learn more about the Canadian refugee program. From what I can tell, it is a lot like ours.

Like us, Canada carefully screens potential candidates while they are overseas. They also run their own security checks. Indeed, those checks include systematic consultation with the United States and vetting against our terrorism and national security databases under information sharing agreements we have in place with Canada.

It’s true that Canada is doing this screening faster than usual, but that does not mean it is doing less than they previously had done.

The Canadian government has surged resources to speed up the time of refugee processing, and states emphatically that it is not cutting corners.

In fact, all the members of this Committee recently received a letter from the Canadian ambassador to the U.S. laying out the screening process for these refugees and the close cooperation with our own security and border agencies. I'd like to place that letter in the record now.

The first group of refugees Canada is reviewing is restricted to families, women, and other at-risk populations. I should also point out that, with very few exceptions, almost no single, fighting-age males are being considered in this first batch of 25,000 refugees.

Moreover, nearly half of the refugees are privately sponsored – that is, families or organizations in Canada have committed to helping them adjust to life in that country and even pay to support them for the first year.

That kind of arrangement can be very helpful in integrating new arrivals and helping safeguard against alienation or radicalization.

Like our country, Canada has a long, proud history of helping refugees. In fact, some of the Southeast Asian refugees resettled in Canada in earlier decades are now stepping up to sponsor Syrian families.

Finally, it is very important to point out that it would take four years before refugees living in Canada are potentially eligible for citizenship and the right to travel visa-free to the United States. Until then, they would need a visa to come to our country and, then, be subject to fresh screening against U.S. criminal and intelligence databases before they can cross our borders.

In short, I think we should support our ally Canada in doing the right thing in the most secure manner possible when it comes to Syrian refugees.

And as we do that, let's keep our eye on the ball. Vilifying refugees coming to the United States or Canada only serves as a distraction from the real challenge of defeating ISIS on the battlefield and combatting homegrown violent extremism here on our shores.

Providing safe haven for a few of the millions of people victimized by ISIS and the Syrian war will not hurt that cause, I believe it can actually help us.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for holding this hearing. I look forward to learning more from our witnesses.

Statement of Guidy Mamann
Senior Partner, Mamann, Sandaluk & Kingwell, LLC

Toronto, Canada - February 3, 2016

Senator Johnson, distinguished members of this committee, ladies and gentlemen.

I want to thank you very much for inviting me here today to discuss the security implications and unanswered questions about Canada's recent plan to resettle Syrian refugees in Canada.

As I am sure you are aware from my biography, I am a Canadian immigration lawyer who has dedicated his entire career to bringing all kinds of newcomers to Canada including, thousands of refugees. I very much believe that all countries should do their utmost to help provide safe harbour to those in genuine need of protection.

You have not asked me here today to champion the cause of refugees but to address your concerns about the security implications of Canada's plan.

To understand the security risks associated with this plan, you must first understand the context in which this plan evolved.

Background

In the months prior to our federal election just this past October, Justin Trudeau and his Liberal party made it a major part of their election campaign to bring 25,000 Syrian refugees to Canada by the end of 2015. He won the election and became prime minister on November 4, 2015. This left him only 57 days to process and land 25,000 refugees. I was asked on national television if this was doable and I expressed great doubt that it was. I knew that such applications normally take up to 62 months, and even longer, to conclude. Not surprisingly, the target was missed when only 6,000 refugees arrived in Canada prior to the December 31 target date. The date to complete the remaining 19,000 applications has now been extended by two months. However, the government has also announced that an additional 25,000 will be brought in by December 31st of this year. Accordingly, the initial plan for 25,000 has now doubled to 50,000 and the original estimated cost of \$100 million has now been revised to \$1.2 billion.

This is not a rescue mission. This is a resettlement mission. The people we are helping have already escaped the conflict zone and have already reached safety in Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey. We are only relocating them and offering them permanent resettlement. We are making no attempt, whatsoever, to rescue people who are actually in Syria and who are in imminent danger. Accordingly, there is no apparent urgency to the situation. Nonetheless, self-imposed deadlines have been adopted which will, undoubtedly, put tremendous pressure on our security personnel to complete their background checks by the target dates.

Let me address some of the main security issues arising from this plan.

1. The Liberal government has assured the Canadian public that no security steps will be skipped and that all applicants will be fully screened before arrival. The Canada Border Services Agency, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and the Canadian Security Intelligence Service all stated that they

are up to the task. This was affirmed by the Canadian ambassador to the US, Gary Doer, who wrote to this committee last week in response to the scheduling of this hearing. I have no reason to doubt any of them. I have worked opposite, but closely and co-operatively, with these agencies for my entire career and have no doubt that they will not intentionally cut corners in order to deliver a politically expedient result.

However, they will be under tremendous pressure to deliver an unprecedented volume of work in record time. The performance of overseas security checks is a highly specialized field and it is difficult, if not impossible, to grow that skill set in a short period of time. Our government has recently deployed 500 officials to Jordan and Lebanon to help with medical and background checks. However, it is unclear what expertise these people might bring to the table and what databases they may have reference to. Furthermore, Canada closed its embassy in Damascus in 2012 and the information we have is old, and many of the government offices in Syria that had reliable records have been destroyed or have been compromised. In any event, background checks cannot eliminate risk. They simply cannot tell us what will happen in the future.

2. To contain risk, the Canadian plan excludes single men. The plan is only open to families, women, and children. Again, this measure will certainly help to reduce security risks but won't eliminate them. Case in point, the Boston marathon bombing in 2013 was committed by two adult brothers who immigrated to the USA as refugees when they were just children. Also, women are increasingly becoming involved in acts of terror. Consider the case in point, Tashfeen Malik, and her husband who sponsored her to the USA on a fiancée visa, and who together killed 14 people in San Bernardino in December 2015.

3. I have been asked by your staff if Canada's private sponsors might help to mitigate security risks by providing monitoring of the families that they have sponsored. These private citizens are not trained nor selected for such a role. They are simply good Canadians looking to provide financial help and settlement assistance. They are not expected to play any surveillance functions.

4. I have also been asked about the access that this group of 50,000 might have to the United States. As permanent residents of Canada, they will not qualify for your visa waiver program but will qualify once they become Canadian citizens. They will be eligible to apply for Canadian citizenship after residing in Canada for four years. Like all other Canadian citizens, they will be able to present themselves at the US border and seek admission right at the port-of-entry. Having said all of this, as you may know, our respective borders remain quite porous. Our checkpoints are only effective with respect to people who choose to use them. Many successfully avoid our checkpoints everyday going in both directions.

5. Canada passed some very controversial legislation in 2014 known as Bill C-24. It currently allows our government to revoke anyone's Canadian citizenship for serious acts against Canada, provided that the person is a dual national and is convicted of offences related to spying, treason or terrorism. I do not believe that the US has similar legislation. However, Prime Minister Trudeau has promised to repeal those provisions once elected. I anticipate that this will be happening very soon.

6. The last, but certainly not the least, source of potential concern is the demographics of this particular group of refugees. When compared to other large groups of refugees, one could easily argue that this group represents a relatively higher-risk demographic. Syria is widely considered to be a major hotbed of international terror. Large parts of the country are controlled by ISIS which, sadly, enjoys

some considerable local support. Virtually the entire country supports one of the three warring factions, i.e. ISIS, the Assad government, or the rebels. All three groups have been associated with assorted atrocities and violations of human rights. By definition, refugees do not necessarily come to our country because they share our values. They come to our country because they often have no other choice. Whether or not they possess or adopt our values, is something that only time will tell.

I would like to address some unanswered questions for Americans to think about in relation to this particular plan. But for the sake of time, I will reserve comment until the question portion of this hearing, and only, if asked.

1. Does it make sense to impose strict timelines to complete background checks when dealing with people who have successfully fled the conflict zone?
2. How can Canada or the US ensure effective background checks in countries where we have no assets and have no reliable personnel on the ground to verify claims of identity, nationality, place of residence, family relationships, political affiliations, and any role in a particular conflict?
3. Should preference be given to those who are specifically targeted for persecution over those who face the normal dangers associated with a conflict?
4. Should we be taking in people from recent conflicts ahead of people who are still waiting in refugee camps as a result of earlier conflicts?
5. What impact will the reallocation of resources have on other immigration lines like family sponsorships, professional, and investor immigration?
6. Finally, is it time to rethink our international convention on refugees and start to consider temporary rather than permanent resettlement; regional solutions rather than international solutions; and perhaps recognition of refugees even if they have not been able to escape their country of persecution?

In Conclusion, the extent to which we help refugees, and those in need, defines who we are as a country. Canada has decided to accept 50,000 refugees from the millions displaced by the Syrian conflict. While I think there was a better way of handling some aspects this initiative, the cause of helping genuine refugees is a good one. Having said that, there are unavoidable costs and risks associated with this type of endeavour. Our government believes that those risks are manageable. I know that we have experienced and dedicated men and women in our security agencies who are working feverishly to meet our governments' time lines.

Whether or not our efforts will work out well in the end, only time will tell.

Thank you very much.

Guidy Mamann, JD

Mamann, Sandaluk & Kingwell LLP, Toronto, Canada

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Opening Statement

David B. Harris
Director, International Intelligence Program
INSIGNIS Strategic Research Inc
Ottawa, Canada

**United States Senate Committee on Homeland
Security and Governmental Affairs**

Hearing on

“Canada’s Fast-Track Refugee Plan: Unanswered Questions and
Implications for U.S. National Security”

SD-342 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Wednesday, 3 February 2016

Opening Statement

David B. Harris

Director, International Intelligence Program
INSIGNIS Strategic Research Inc
Ottawa, Canada

United States Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

"Canada's Fast-Track Refugee Plan:
Unanswered Questions and Implications for U.S. National Security"

Wednesday, 3 February 2016

Mr Chairman, Honourable Senators,

My name is David Harris. I am a Canadian lawyer and Director of the International Intelligence Program, *INSIGNIS* Strategic Research Inc., with decades of experience in national-security affairs. My remit is to address security matters involving Canada's Syrian-refugee influx and its implications for the United States and Canada.

The new Canadian government took office committed to fast-tracking 25,000 Syrian refugees into Canada, between early November 2015 and the end of that year. Complications led the government to adjust the intake goals, to 10,000 before the end of 2015 and another 15,000, prior to 1 March 2016. By last week, about 15,000 had entered Canada.¹ Recent reports indicate that Canada might raise its target-level and take in 50,000 Syrian refugees by the end of 2016.

SECURITY

Given the threat-picture in Syria and the scale of intake, security considerations require thoughtful attention.

First, recall that the US population exceeds by nine times Canada's 35-million population. Therefore, 25,000 thousand refugees in Canada would be the equivalent of 225,000 refugees in the US. All this, by 1 March.

Note: Content of sources cited in this presentation, or available through associated links, does not necessarily reflect the views of David B. Harris, *INSIGNIS* Strategic Research Inc. or affiliated individuals or organizations.

¹ Government of Canada, Citizenship and Immigration Canada, "WelcomeRefugees: Milestones and key figures," [cic.gc.ca, http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/welcome/milestones.asp](http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/welcome/milestones.asp) (accessed 31 January 2016).

Britain, almost twice Canada's population, will take several years to admit 20,000. And FBI Director James Comey has highlighted screening difficulties America would face in admitting 10,000 Syrians. He warned that information-gaps could lead to inadequate screening.

If the extensive US intelligence system would have trouble security-screening 10,000 Syrians in a year, how likely is it that Canada, even with valuable US assistance, could adequately screen two-and-a-half times that number in four months?

Canada's special fast-track processing of 25,000 Syrians in four months, should be compared to the standard, non-fast-track process's 13-month timeline for government-assisted Syrian refugees and 27 months for the privately sponsored.² Note that this 25,000 figure is roughly equal to Canada's entire average annual refugee intake.

And remember the risk context.

Apart from accounts of a suspected ISIS aim of penetrating international refugee streams, a Lebanese cabinet minister warned in September 2015 that at least two percent of the 1.1 million Syrians in Lebanon's refugee camps – about 20,000 people – were connected to ISIS extremism.³ Canada takes refugees from Lebanese UNHCR camps.

More generally, Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies polls determined that thirteen percent of Syrian refugees in Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey – source countries for Canada's Syrian migrants – had positive views of IS.⁴ How many more might favour al Qaeda, al Nusra, Hezbollah, Assad militias and other non-IS threat-groups?

In some cases, evidence for screening might be available. Where, for example, a migrant's traces are on an IED in Syria or Iraq. Or, where time-consuming investigation connects dots.

² As of 27 January 2016, category selections on Canada's immigration department's website computer calculated "13 month(s)" for category selections "Refugee", "Government-assisted refugees" and "Syria". For categories "Refugees", "Privately sponsored refugees" and "Syria", the result was "27 month(s)". This meant that Syrian refugees subject to the established, standard process, rather than the fast-tracked one, faced a 27-month processing time if they were privately sponsored, and a 13-month processing time, if government-assisted. See Government of Canada, Citizenship and Immigration Canada, "Check application processing times," Update of 27 January 2016, <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/information/times/index.asp#> (accessed 29 January 2016).

³ Jack Blanchard, "Officials warn 20,000 ISIS jihadists 'have infiltrated Syrian refugee camps'," *mirror.co.uk*, 14 September 2015, <http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/officials-warn-20000-isis-jihadis-6443516> (accessed 17 September 2015).

⁴ Ryan Mauro, "13 Percent of Syrian Refugees Support ISIS: Poll," *clarionproject.org*, 1 November 2015, http://www.clarionproject.org/analysis/13-percent-syrian-refugees-support-isis-poll?utm_source=dlvr.it&utm_medium=twitter (accessed 3 November 2015).

But how readily can one gain access to a migrant's history, when that migrant is from a hostile or chaotic country? We cannot reliably confer with authorities of such jurisdictions – assuming authority exists – about many prospective refugees.

It is suggested in Canada that risk can be mitigated by barring unaccompanied adult Syrian males. But people lie about age, and many males and females below the age of majority are in ISIS ranks. And what effect would an adult-male embargo have on at-risk adult gay and other males targeted by terrorists?

Meanwhile, in favouring women with children, and men with families, do we know who is actually married to whom and whose children are accompanying whom? Are some ISIS fighters' families involved? Would they, in turn, sponsor relatives or ostensible relatives?

Are there safety issues for existing North American minorities, in a mass-movement from a homeland where the demonizing of Jews is national policy⁵ and life-threatening LGBT-persecution is a crisis?⁶ And what of the importing of people from a region where anti-black racism⁷ is an especially serious matter?

Beyond this, secret German government documents reportedly claim that refugee numbers should be multiplied by a "family factor" of between four and eight, to determine how many more migrants will ultimately be sponsored by current refugees.⁸ What could future, refugee-to-refugee "chain sponsorship" mean for Canadian stability and border security?

We must also ask what security resources are being diverted to the fast-track project, at a time when security is already burdened by an existing, annual immigration intake of almost 300,000, one of the biggest *per capita* figures in the world – at least double, *per capita*, American immigration.

In the past, there have been few newcomers to Canada crossing the US border for terrorist purposes. But, failed millennium bomber Ahmed Ressam, and Ghazi

⁵ United States Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, Contemporary Global Anti-Semitism: A Report Provided to the United States Congress, state.gov, 13 March 2008, http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/102406.htm#_Toc174854656 (31 January 2016); United States Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, 2010 Human Rights Report: Syria, state.gov, 8 April 2011, <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/2010/nea/154473.htm> (accessed 30 January 2016).

⁶ Dan Littauer, "Syria's attack on gay people must end," *theguardian.com*, 7 July 2010, <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2010/jul/07/homosexual-syria-persecution-lgbt-rights> (accessed 31 January 2016); Haley Bobseine, "Out and Down in Syria's Civil War," *foreignpolicy.com*, 4 December 2013, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2013/12/04/out-and-down-in-syrias-civil-war/> (accessed 31 January 2016).

⁷ See, for example, Michael Curtis, "Racism in Arab Lands," *gatestoneinstitute.org*, 28 June 2016, <http://www.gatestoneinstitute.org/3136/racism-arab-lands> (accessed 30 January 2016).

⁸ David Charter, *The Times*, "Angela Merkel hit by leaked forecast of 1.5 million migrants," *theaustralian.com*, 7 October 2015, <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/world/angela-merkel-hit-by-leaked-forecast-of-1.5-million-migrants/news-story/f18b16b548247b42f634a8c0c8f6f197?> (accessed 27 January 2016).

Ibrahim Abu Mezer's 1997 arrest in his Brooklyn bomb factory, remind us of the cross-border risks. Concerns also exist that extremists could move north from the US,⁹ and about the chronic problem of migrants, with US-granted visas, from Syria and elsewhere, turning up in Canada and making refugee claims.

Greater transparency in Canada's Syrian-refugee security process would reassure Canadians and their allies. Fortunately, the current Canadian government's stated commitment to transparency gives hope that details of the Syrian refugee security process will be made public. Indeed, the Canadian government, through its ambassador in Washington, may have begun the process, with a recent statement. These security-related details should include security criteria used during Syrian migrants' security interviews; statistics regarding acceptance and rejection rates; and the record of time spent on the security investigation and screening, per refugee.

There is little doubt that those in Canada tasked with the job of screening refugees are doing the best they can, given the constraints, but the constraints are significant and we must be realistic about that fact.

Thank-you, Mr Chairman.

⁹ For an exploration of illicit border-crossing into and from the United States, including travel with various degrees of connection to terrorism, see Kathleen Smarick and Gary D. LaFree, "Border Crossings and Terrorist Attacks in the United States: Lessons for Protecting against Dangerous Entrants," Final Report to the Office of University Programs, Science and Technology Directorate, U.S. Department of Homeland Security (College Park MD: National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism [START], 2012), http://www.start.umd.edu/sites/default/files/files/publications/START_BorderCrossingsTerroristAttacks.pdf (accessed 31 January 2016), including Appendix element, "Descriptive Analyses of Data on Border Crossings by U.S. Terrorists," March 2012, http://www.start.umd.edu/sites/default/files/files/publications/START_BorderCrossingsTerroristAttacks_Appendices.pdf (accessed 31 January 2016). In this Appendix, see also Jaime Shoemaker, "Border Crossings and Terrorist Attacks in the United States: Case Studies," Report to Science and Technology Directorate, U.S. Department of Homeland Security (College Park, MD: START, 2012).



National Border Patrol Council

**Testimony of Dean Mandel
On behalf of the
National Border Patrol Council
In front of United States Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee
February 2016**

Chairman Johnson and Ranking Member Carper, thank you for providing me the opportunity to testify on behalf of the National Border Patrol Council (NBPC).

The NBPC represents the interests of 16,500 line Agents at the Border Patrol and my name is Dean Mandel. I am an active duty Border Patrol Agent assigned to the Buffalo Sector. I joined the Border Patrol in 2006 after having served in the U.S. Navy for 4 years.

Canadian Border

We live in a highly connective world and the tragedy in Paris is unfortunately an example of where one country's policies can impact their neighbors. As someone stationed on the Northern Border I want to be clear, what happens in Canada matters to the United States. Whether it be Canadian policies toward refugees or immigration, their decisions impact U.S. security given the size and nature of our shared border.

I started my career at the Southern border in Nogales, Arizona. In Nogales, we had air support, fencing, cameras, and a solid network of ground sensors. Although we never had sufficient manpower, in an emergency you almost always had backup.

On the Northern border it is entirely different. Of the 21,000 Agents in the Border Patrol only 2,100 are assigned to the Northern border. When you take into account supervisors who are not in the field, annual leave, sick leave, days off, training days, and the fact we work a three shift rotation, we only have about 300 Agents guarding the entire Northern border at any one time. I would assess that there are approximately as many Capitol Police on duty right now protecting the Capitol complex as we have on the entire 4,000 mile Northern Border.

On the Southern border, we have one Agent for every linear mile. Each of these Agents is made more effective by the entire infrastructure of fencing, cameras, air support, and sensors. On the Northern border, we have one agent for every 13.5 miles and we have much less of this infrastructure. On the Southern border, if you ask an Agent, they will probably tell you we are at best 40 percent effective in apprehending illegal aliens and drug smugglers. On the Northern border, I would estimate the effectiveness rate is fraction of this figure.

Canadian Immigration, Refugee and Visa Policy

I know that there is a significant controversy regarding Canada's recent decision to admit 25,000 Syrian refugees. In my opinion, it is very difficult to gage the risk posed by these refugees and much of the risk will depend on the screening process utilized by the Canadians.

Candidly of greater concern to me from a border security perspective, are the over 5 million foreign visitors that enter Canada annually. Canada is a diverse nation and with a per capita Muslim population three times our own. As a result, they have major inflows from tourist and business travelers from throughout the Middle East.

Canada has a visa waiver system similar to ours with 51 countries. The visa waiver system is a huge security gap because it is operated under the assumption that if you were, for example, from France that you posed no security risk. Given the number of terrorist cells uncovered in Europe alone this assessment of risk was completely false.

Starting in March Canada will require visa waiver travelers to obtain an Electronic Travel Authorization before being admitted. This is an important first step toward closing this security gap and will decrease our vulnerability. However, database checks are only as effective as the database itself. As we saw in San Bernardino, many terrorists simply are not on law enforcement's or the intelligence community's radar.

For visitors from non-visa waiver countries, Canada again has a similar system as ours. Applicants are required to submit photos, proof of financial support, a return ticket and a police certificate from their country of residence. Although Canada takes its immigration laws seriously, like the U.S. it also lacks a comprehensive visa tracking system that ensures that individuals leave the country.

Finally, there is the issue of homegrown terrorism. Unfortunately, no country, including Canada and the United States, is immune from this threat. Given that Canadian citizens do not require a visa for visits less than 90 days, we are relying heavily on Canadian law enforcement and intelligence agencies to identify potential threats.

Conclusion

Canada is a valued partner when it comes to border security. Personally, I wish we had such a partner on our Southern border. However, we have failed to properly invest in our Northern border. As a result we are gambling that Canadian law enforcement and intelligence effectively uncovers domestic terror cells and screens over 5 million visitors annually for threats. As an American, the idea that we would rely so heavily on a foreign government, even one as friendly, professional and competent as Canada, concerns me.

Please remember that Paris attackers organized their operation in Belgium right under the noses of the Belgium Security Services. They were able to do this because the Belgium Security Service had been underfunded for years despite the fact it was open knowledge that on a per capita basis Belgium supplied more foreign fighters to ISIS than any other European Union country.

Northern Border Patrol Agents apprehend over 3,000 individuals annually. Given that we only have 300 Agents per shift covering almost 4,000 miles of the border, I think we are doing a good job with what we have.

The problem is that we simply do not have enough manpower. We have more Agents in El Paso than we have on our entire Northern border. The NBPC believes that the current force level of 2,100 Agents needs to be augmented by another 1,500 Agents on our Northern border. This additional manpower will help to decrease our almost complete reliance on Canadian law enforcement and intelligence agencies for our security.

Thank you again and I look forward to answering any questions that you might have.

Testimony by Laura Dawson, PhD
 Director of the Canada Institute,
 Wilson Center

February 3, 2016

Good morning,

I have worked on U.S.-Canada relations for more than 20 years, as a professor, as a policy analyst advising both the U.S. and Canadian governments, and most recently as Director of the Canada Institute at the Wilson Center.

Canada has no greater friend or ally than the United States, and that is a responsibility that Canada takes very seriously. While Canadian policies may differ from those in the United States, attention to shared security and the safety of all citizens in our shared territory is a guiding principle of Canadian policy making.

U.S.-Canada information sharing and security cooperation is unmatched among any other two countries in the world. Within a framework of agreements on security, border and law enforcement, Canadian and U.S. officials communicate directly with each other every single day through well developed institutional and personal relationships.

September 11 was a catalyst for a new security and cooperation paradigm. Canadians recognize that an attack on one is an attack on all. They took post 9/11 security measures very seriously. The 2007 Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative ensures that no one crossed our borders without a passport or equivalent proof of identity.

The principle of perimeter security was institutionalized in the 2011 Beyond the Border initiative, ensuring that travellers and cargo entering Canada or the United States through any port - air, land, marine, or rail -- is subject to the same high level of scrutiny. Information is shared swiftly and seamlessly to relevant security and law enforcement agencies. New technologies in biometrics and data analytics make this level of cooperation possible, and the highest level of commitment from both governments have made it a reality.

It is a myth that 9/11 attackers entered the United States through Canada. In fact, Canadian officials – in cooperation with U.S. counterparts – have been responsible for identifying and stopping potential attacks on the United States before they occur. One well known joint mission is Operation Smooth, which led to the arrest of two men with Al-Qaeda links who were plotting to derail a train running between Toronto and New York in 2013. This mission was the result of successful collaboration between U.S. and Canadian security and law enforcement teams.

Canada's Syrian refugee policy may differ from that of the U.S. but the level of attention to security is no less vigilant. No refugee can enter Canada before all biometric and biologic data is checked against U.S. criminal, immigration, and security databases. This is an automatic process, not something that officials can decide to do or not do.

According to the State Department, of the 785,000 refugees admitted to the United States only a tiny fraction have been arrested or removed from the United States due to terrorism concerns and none of these were Syrian.¹ If someone wishes to harm the United States or Canada, entering the country as a refugee is a very inefficient way to achieve this, but let's talk about how Canada safeguards against this possibility.

First, refugees coming to Canada are from low risk groups – families with children, single mothers, LGBT men – all of whom have taken refuge in Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey. Sixty percent are women and 22 percent are children. This is not an ISIS demographic.

Cases are first vetted by the UNHCR and then referred to Canada. Canadian officials determine which of these candidates meets vulnerability criteria and those who do are invited to an admissibility interview. If they satisfy officials during the interview, then applicants are subject to a full health and security screening.

Biometric and biographical data is collected and checked against Canadian and U.S. criminal, immigration, and security databases. As I mentioned above, the decision to check every applicant against U.S. databases is not optional. It is mandatory and automatic. Ralph Goodale, Canada's Minister of Public Safety and counterpart to the U.S. Secretary of Homeland Security has made clear that if there's any doubt about an applicant, or any of the data, that application will be put aside.

And, all security and health screening must be completed before anyone boards an airplane.

25,000 is a large number of refugees for Canada but it is consistent with Canada's response to historic crises.

- Canada accepted more than 250,000 refugees after World War II,
- 37,000 Hungarian refugees after 1956,
- 10,000 Czechs after 1968, and
- More than 50,000 Vietnamese boat people in the late 1980s.

Before it was even an independent country, Canada was a haven for African Americans fleeing from slavery in the United States.

¹ U.S. Department of State, *Daily Press Briefing* (November 18, 2015).
<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/dpb/2015/11/249655.htm>

The Prime Minister, the premiers of Canada, and the Governor General are fully onside with the decision to admit 25,000 refugees. There has been a tremendous outpouring of support from business and community groups, especially the faith community – Muslim, Christian, Jewish.

The government has set a target but there will be delays. Resettlement is complex but the government has committed to ensure that nothing gets overlooked in the process. The Prime Minister has been very clear, “we will meet our target but we will make sure we do it right.”

One of the ways that Canada facilitates integration into communities is through the private sponsorship program. About 10,000 of the 25,000 refugees are expected to be sponsored by community groups. To be admitted to the sponsorship program, groups must meet a number of criteria including agreeing to cover all living expenses for the sponsored family for a year. Moreover, they are responsible for helping to find housing and assist with language, education, and anything the family might need to make a successful transition.

I was involved in the refugee committee at my church in Ottawa, Canada. It was a big commitment. We were on call 24/7 making sure the family had everything they needed from winter boots to babysitting while the Mom took language classes. It was difficult but incredibly worthwhile. We were connected to the family as they put down roots in our town. If you look across communities in Canada, the refugees of the past are the citizens who are today giving back to their neighbors. Refugees who arrived as children are now doctors, teachers, and even Cabinet ministers. Many of them are leading in today's refugee resettlement efforts.

To return to where I started, Canada is the United States' closest ally, largest trading partner, and there is no relationship that it takes more seriously. I urge the members of this committee to treat that relationship with equal seriousness. Canada is not a weak link in the fight against terrorism; rather it is a part of a shared security perimeter with the United States of America.

Thank you.

The Canada Institute is dedicated to advancing cooperation and understanding between the United States and Canada. The Canada Institute is part of the Wilson Center. Chartered by Congress as the official memorial to President Woodrow Wilson, the Center is the nation's key non-partisan policy forum for tackling global issues through independent research and open dialogue to inform actionable ideas for the policy community.

Further reading:

Michael Friscolanti, "Saving Family 417: The journey of one Syrian mother, her three children—and the complete strangers who made it their mission to bring them to Canada," *Macleans* (January 13, 2016). <http://www.macleans.ca/saving-family-no-417/>



CWS Statement to the U.S. Senate Committee on Homeland Security & Government Affairs pertaining to its hearing *Canada's Fast-Track Refugee Plan: Unanswered Questions and Implications for U.S. National Security* Wednesday, February 3, 2016

As a 70-year old humanitarian organization representing 37 Protestant, Anglican and Orthodox communions and 33 refugee resettlement offices across the country, Church World Service urges the Committee to affirm the importance of the current U.S. refugee resettlement program, which has the most robust national security and screening procedures in the world. CWS urges all Senators to reject any proposals that would stop, or otherwise hinder, refugee resettlement or put at risk vital funding for refugee protection overseas and resettlement in the United States.

To be considered a refugee, individuals must prove that they have fled persecution due to their nationality, ethnicity, religion, political opinion or membership in a particular social group. Refugees face three options: return to their home country, integrate in the country to which they first fled, or be resettled to a third country. For the millions who are unable to return home due to significant threats to their safety and rejection by the country to which they first fled, resettlement is the last resort. While less than one percent of the world's estimated 19.5 million refugees are resettled to a third country, the United States is one of 28 countries that resettles refugees.¹ The U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP) is a public-private partnership that helps rescue refugees who have no other means of finding safety, prioritizing refugees who are especially vulnerable. Of the Syrian refugees who have been resettled in the United States, 77 percent are women and children.²

Security measures are intrinsic to the integrity of the U.S. refugee resettlement program, which is the most difficult way to enter the country. All refugees undergo thorough and rigorous security screenings prior to arriving in the United States, including but not limited to multiple biographic and identity investigations; FBI biometric checks of applicants' fingerprints and photographs; in-depth, in-person interviews by well-trained Department of Homeland Security officers; medical screenings; investigations by the National Counterterrorism Center; and other checks by U.S. domestic and international intelligence agencies. In addition, mandatory supervisory review of all decisions, random case assignment, forensic document testing, and interpreter monitoring are in place to maintain the security of the refugee resettlement program. Due to technological advances, refugees from Syria are also undergoing iris scans to confirm their identity. As a result, refugees are the most vetted individuals to travel to the United States.

Similar to the United States, Canada's Refugee and Humanitarian Resettlement Program prioritizes resettling the most vulnerable refugees, including women; families with children; unaccompanied children with family ties in Canada; and individuals who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or intersex (LGBTI).³ All refugees undergo robust security screening procedures to ensure national and regional security. As the Canadian Public Safety Minister has explained, security screenings "involve individual interviews, the collection of biometric data and thorough checks of U.S. and Canadian security databases."⁴ Refugees go through multi-layered screenings that involve individual interviews by visa officers, document verification from law enforcement and national security partners, biometric and biographic collection including fingerprints, identity verification by the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA), and health screenings.⁵ It can take up to 36 months to process an application before a refugee can arrive in Canada.⁶ Border Services Officers welcome and process refugees⁷, and the Canada Border Services Agency, Department of National Defence / Canadian Armed Forces, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada; Royal Canadian Mounted Police, among others, work together to ensure the security of Canada's borders, including those shared with the United States.⁸ In addition, refugees need to acquire a special Refugee Travel Document to travel from Canada into the United States, and applicants must provide a letter from the Immigration and Refugee Board, confirmation of permanent residence, and a Verification of Status document.⁹

CWS affirms the need for all countries, including the United States and Canada, to increase the resettlement of the most vulnerable, especially Syrian refugees currently facing the worst humanitarian crisis the world has seen for 20 years. Refugees contribute to their new communities with their innovative skills, dedicated work, and inspiring perseverance. CWS stands committed to working with both chambers of Congress and the Administration to resettle refugees as part of the implementation of our foreign policy and humanitarian responsibilities. We urge all Senators to support these efforts to provide safety to vulnerable refugees from Syria and beyond.

¹ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Resettlement. 2016. <<http://www.unhcr.org/pages/4a16b1676.html>>.

² "Myths and Facts: Resettling Syrian Refugees." U.S. Department of State. <<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ips/2015/11/250005.htm>>.

³ Daniel Leblanc & Steven Chase, Overseas security screening to slow down refugee arrivals: Ottawa. The Globe and Mail. Nov. 25, 2015.

<<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/ottawa-will-miss-refugee-deadline-by-two-months-says-minister/article27463376/>>.

⁴ Christopher Guly, Canada plans to resettle 25,000 Syrian refugees by the end of February. Los Angeles Times, Nov. 24, 2015. <<http://www.latimes.com/world/mexico-americas/la-fi-canda-refugees-20151124-story.html>>.

⁵ Government of Canada, #WelcomeRefugees: Security and health screening. 2016. <<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/welcome/overview/security.asp>>.

⁶ Government of Canada, How long does it take before the refugee can come to Canada? 2016. <<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/helpcentre/answer.asp?q=084&t=11>>.

⁷ Government of Canada, #WelcomeRefugees: Security and health screening. 2016. <<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/welcome/overview/security.asp>>.

⁸ Government of Canada, #WelcomeRefugees: How it Will Work. 2016. <<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/welcome/overview.asp>>.

⁹ Government of Canada, I am a refugee and I need to travel outside Canada. What documents do I need to travel? 2016.



DISCIPLES REFUGEE & IMMIGRATION MINISTRIES STATEMENT
TO THE U.S. SENATE COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY & GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS
 pertaining to its Wednesday, February 3, 2016 hearing:
Canada's Fast-Track Refugee Plan: Unanswered Questions and Implications for U.S. National Security

As a North American Christian faith movement of over 600,000 which was birthed on the American frontier, our heritage of congregations assisting refugees goes back more than over 75 years. We are grateful to be part of a faith tradition that has spoken again and again of our key faith value of welcoming the stranger despite religious or cultural background. Since WWII, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the U.S. and Canada has worked through our Disciples Home Missions office of Refugee & Immigration Ministries, in partnership with Church World Service, to resettle over 40,000 refugees in the past six decades.

Now, in these days when our world is facing the worst humanitarian crisis since the end of World War II, we re-affirm strongly our readiness to continue to embrace refugees, and to welcome them without exclusion. We are ready to do so because we are called to love our neighbor as ourselves. Indeed, in light of the reality of over 60 million displaced persons and 20 million refugees in the world, we strive for a greater goal of hospitality—one which our history has shown is attainable through strong public-private partnerships.

We believe that, just as the U.S. admitted over 650,000 European refugees during WWII, and between 100,000-200,000 Southeast Asian refugees for over a decade and a half after the Vietnam War, we are capable now to safely admit even greater numbers of refugees fleeing violence. We recognize that the multiple existing levels of refugee security screenings mean refugees are the most heavily scrutinized of all arrivals into the United States. As one of 28 countries which resettles refugees, we are grateful for each of these security screenings pre-arrival; including many biographic and identity screenings, FBI biometric checks of fingerprints and photos, detailed interviews with trained DHS officers, medical screenings, identify research through the National Counterterrorism Center, as well as additional domestic and international intelligence checks. Visa processing is separate and unique from the U.S. refugee resettlement process. Syrian refugees likewise undergo additional iris screenings and tests to determine their non-affiliation with any terrorist group. This amount of security is appropriate and of greatest importance. Additionally, for U.S. born and foreign born youth in the U.S., we emphasize the continuing need for youth programs which educate youth about the dangers of affiliating with any efforts of recruitment into terrorist activities.

As our denomination likewise has congregations located within Canada, we are aware that the Canadian government also offers multiple security and health screenings for its refugees, including biometric checks, personal interviews, and screening through Canadian databases, as well as interviews by visa officers, law and security partner fingerprint verifications, and identify screenings and border protections (including along the U.S. border) by the Canada Border Services Agency, the Department of National Defense/Canadian Armed Forces, Immigration, Refugees & Citizenship Canada, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, and others. Further, no refugees in Canada are allowed to travel into the U.S. without first acquiring refugee travel documents, which include a letter from the Canadian Immigration and Refugee Board which confirms their permanent residence and verifies their status.

Together with multiple faith partners, we urge that a negotiated solution to the Syria crisis be made a top U.S. diplomatic priority, and that armed involvement of partners must cease, together with provision of arms, and training of opposition groups. We encourage the Canadian government to support the same goals. As we build relationships of peace and solidarity across religious divides internationally, in our own nation we must counter anti-Muslim sentiment at every turn—allowing us to offer protection to refugees in great need. Our congregations are constantly expressing their willingness to help house, teach English, mentor, employ, and surround the world's most vulnerable people—and we are ready to continuing to partner in welcoming all who come to our shores.

See this site for documentation of Canada's refugee processing and security screenings:

<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/welcome/overview.asp>

See these articles related to Canada's commitments to welcome Syrian refugees:

<http://www.latimes.com/world/mexico-americas/la-fg-canada-refugees-20151211-story.html> and

<http://www.latimes.com/world/mexico-americas/la-fg-canada-refugees-20151124-story.html>

Canadian Embassy



Ambassade du Canada

January 20, 2016

The Honorable Ron Johnson
 United States Senate
 328 Hart Senate Office Building
 Washington, DC 20510-4905

The Honorable Tom Carper
 United States Senate
 513 Hart Senate Office Building
 Washington, DC 20510-0803

Dear Chairman Johnson and Ranking Member Carper,

I note with interest that the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee will devote its January 27th meeting to discuss Canada's response to the refugee crisis in Syria. I hope the information included here will help inform your discussion and answer any questions you may have.

Canada and the United States both have a proud humanitarian tradition that includes a strong commitment to refugee resettlement. Our two countries have long worked together in responding to humanitarian crises, as we did in the latter half of the 20th century welcoming refugees fleeing oppressive regimes in Hungary, Vietnam and Cambodia. We have also worked together on the airlift of Kosovar refugees in 1999, and more recently following the Haiti earthquake in 2010.

Protecting the security of Canadians, and by extension our American neighbours, while also providing protection to individuals who have been devastated by the war in Syria are key factors guiding the Government of Canada's refugee resettlement plan. Rest assured that no corners, including security screening, are being cut in order to achieve the Government's objectives. Rather, the government has devoted significant resources to this effort, which includes the deployment of military, law enforcement, immigration and border security officers. In keeping with our focus on security, you should know that:

- Each refugee undergoes multiple security screenings at one of our overseas operations centers.
 - This includes the collection of biographic information and biometrics, which are checked against Canadian and U.S. immigration, law enforcement and security databases.
 - Each applicant is also interviewed by a professional, experienced visa officer.
- If Canadian officials have any concerns whatsoever, an application is set aside – zero tolerance.
- Applicants' identification and biometrics are checked and re-checked throughout the screening process, including before boarding planes for Canada and again upon arrival.

- Canada is prioritizing vulnerable refugees who are a low security risk, such as women at risk and complete families. This is consistent with Canada's overall approach to refugee resettlement.
- Once in Canada, the refugees will not be free to travel to the United States. They will require a visa to travel to the U.S.

As refugees arrive in Canada, they are provided with immediate, essential services and long-term settlement support to ensure their successful integration into Canadian society. Since November 24, 2015, Canadians have welcomed over 10,000 refugees.

I would like to take this opportunity to also point out the existing strong cooperation between our two countries on information sharing, making operational improvements at the border, and denying terrorists the ability to use either country as a transit point or to circumvent restrictions imposed by the other. Together, we have implemented a number of measures to support the safety and integrity of our shared border, including:

- An automated capability to exchange visa and immigration information, which reduces identity fraud and enhances eligibility and admissibility decisions before applicants arrive in North America;
- Cross-border maritime law enforcement teams, "Shipriders", consisting of U.S. Coast Guard and RCMP officers, that transit back and forth across the international boundary line to enforce the law on both sides of the border;
- Integrated Border Enforcement Teams that bring together Canadian and U.S. law enforcement in 24 locations along our border to jointly manage land, air and marine environments between ports of entry; and
- The sharing of entry/exit information along our shared land border on non-citizens in a secure and systematic fashion.

It's important to remember that the 9/11 Commission, created by Congress and the President, concluded that none of the hijackers entered the U.S. through Canada. Securing our North American neighborhood against security threats is a shared responsibility and a permanent priority for both countries.

Should you have any questions on our security cooperation with the United States, please do not hesitate to be in touch.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G. Doer', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Gary Doer
Ambassador

cc: The Honorable Kelly Ayotte
The Honorable Tammy Baldwin
The Honorable Cory A. Booker
The Honorable Michael B. Enzi
The Honorable Joni Ernst
The Honorable Heidi Heitkamp
The Honorable James Lankford
The Honorable John McCain
The Honorable Claire McCaskill
The Honorable Rand Paul
The Honorable Gary Peters
The Honorable Rob Portman
The Honorable Ben Sasse
The Honorable Jon Tester

Statement for the Record of the Niskanen Center*
Submitted to
The Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
Hearing on
“Canada’s Fast-Track Refugee Plan: Unanswered Questions and Implications for
U.S. National Security”
February 3, 2015

The worldwide refugee crisis has reached a level not seen since World War II.¹ The current international refugee system has proven inadequate to deal with this historic challenge. Government-led efforts have been delayed and insufficient to handle the unprecedented influx of displaced persons. Fortunately, Canada has operated a program that allows private philanthropists and volunteers to cover the costs of resettling displaced persons and integrating them into Canadian society.

This approach has been highly successful and celebrated as a model for nations around the world. The United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees (UNHCR) has urged nations to adopt private sponsorship of refugees as an “innovative way to increase opportunities for Syrian refugees.”² Peter Sutherland, the UN Special Representative to the Secretary General for International Migration, has said: “A global response also must harness the extraordinary potential of civil society and the private sector.”³

Some important nations, such as Germany and Australia, have already responded to this call.⁴ Canada’s private sponsorship program, however, is an established and successful model from which the U.S. can learn. It is the main reason that America’s northern neighbor has responded more quickly and forcefully to the worldwide refugee crisis than the U.S. has. This statement provides the details of Canada’s program as well as the U.S. history of private resettlement. The final section provides recommendations for the implementation of future privately funded refugee initiatives in the United States.

Canadian Private Sponsorship of Refugee Program

On December 10, 2015, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau welcomed 163 Syrian refugees arriving at the airport with hugs and winter jackets.⁵ Canadian immigration services plan to welcome 25,000 Syrian refugees in total by the end of February 2016.⁶ A substantial part of the country’s resettlement operation is private refugee sponsorship, where groups and individuals in Canada provide refugees with care, lodging, and resettlement assistance.⁷ Private refugee sponsorship has proven very successful in Canada for over 30 years—with a total of 225,000 refugees resettled from 140 countries.⁸

As of January 26, a total of 14,003 Syrian refugees have arrived in Canada. Of that number, 8,004 have been government sponsored and 5,112 have been privately sponsored.⁹ An additional 887 were part of the blended program, which combines the

* The Niskanen Center is a libertarian 501(c)(3) nonprofit think tank located in Washington, D.C. founded

two. Furthermore, 5,886 Syrians have been approved and are awaiting transport.¹⁰ That would bring the total number to about 20,000 since November.

By the end of February, government officials now claim that it is likely that 17,000 Syrian refugees will have been resettled in Canada through government and mixed sponsorship, while 8,000 Syrians will be resettled using private refugee sponsorship.¹¹ From February to the end of the year, Canada intends to add an additional 10,000 refugees—2,000 private and 8,000 public—increasing the total 35,000.

The key to private sponsorship is the link between compassionate Canadians and refugees resettling to a new country. Churches, charities, and groups of citizens provide resettlement assistance, community-based networking, and friendship to refugees – which improve their rate of assimilation, work opportunities, and satisfaction in a new land.

Since 1979, Canada has permitted Canadians to sponsor refugees or individuals in refugee-like situations and fund their resettlement in Canada. The Private Sponsorship of Refugees (PSR) program was created, according to the then-Minister of Manpower and Immigration J.L. Manion, to “offer the possibility of increasing refugee admissions over and above the total achievable through government financed initiatives.”¹² Manion also believed that PSR would enable refugees to “receive settlement services beyond those normally furnished through the federal and provincial government” and “enjoy more individual care and attention than would normally be available.”¹³

Pressure to start the program came from churches and civil society who wanted the Canadian government to do more to provide relief during the Indochinese refugee crisis of the time.¹⁴ The program was immediately tested by 60,000 refugees came to Canada in 1979-1980.¹⁵ More than half of these refugees were sponsored privately.¹⁶ For their efforts, the 1986 UN Nansen Model, an award given to groups for excellence in service to refugees, was given to “the people of Canada.”¹⁷

In 2014, Canada admitted 4,560 privately sponsored refugees exempt from the usual refugee limits.¹⁸ In 2013, more refugees entered through private sponsorship (6,269) than through government assistance (5,661).¹⁹ At its peak in 1989, 21,631 refugees were resettled through private sponsorship. Since the program began in 1979, more than 225,000 refugees have been resettled privately, 42 percent of the total number of refugees resettled since 1978.²⁰

Canada’s Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program Specifics

Private Sponsorship of Refugees (PSR) allows for sponsorship by three groups. First, private charitable refugee organizations known as Sponsorship Agreement Holders (“SAHs”) can sponsor large numbers of refugees in any given year. Second, a group of five or more adult Canadian citizens or permanent residents who live in the area of settlement can join together to create a “Group of 5” and jointly sponsor a refugee. Third, any other group, nonprofit or otherwise, that “is willing and able to commit the sponsorship” in accordance with PSR requirements can register to sponsor.²¹

The Private Sponsorship of Refugees program does not limit SAHs beyond the requirement that they be “reputable local groups or chapters of larger organizations active in the community where the refugee will be settled and that they have resources to meet their commitments.” In 2014, there were 85 SAHs, with 72 percent church connected.²² In 2016, there were 97.²³ Any organization or G5 can form a partnership with any other individual (such as a refugee’s family member) or with any other organization.

The prospective sponsors are assessed to ensure they have the financial means to support a refugee family for at least twelve months. Sponsors must have a detailed plan for helping the newcomers adapt to Canada, with specific points such as who in the group will handle which aspects of the family’s integration.²⁴ In 2015, the average cost per year for a single refugee is roughly 7,320 USD. For a family of four, the cost is \$14,900.²⁵

The government holds these funds and draws on them if the refugee requests government assistances. Sponsors are required to support refugees for up to one year by: providing the cost of food, rent and household utilities, other day-to-day living expenses, clothing, furniture and other household goods; locating interpreters; selecting a family physician and dentist; assisting with applying for provincial health-care coverage; enrolling children in school and adults in language training; introducing newcomers to people with similar personal interests; providing orientation with regard to banking services, transportation, etc.; and helping in the search for employment.²⁶

Sponsors may also be asked to repay government loans that refugees received to cover their travel to Canada.²⁷ All sponsors must submit a “settlement plan” to the Canadian government for approval prior to sponsorship to illustrate in detail how they will meet the program requirements.²⁸

Under the Sponsorship Agreements private sponsors retained the right to identify a particular refugee or refugee family they wished to sponsor. In such instances the overseas visa office would contact the named individuals and review their admissibility criteria. Sponsors can also submit “un-named sponsorships”, in which case the sponsor would be matched with a refugee by an immigration officer. The sponsor was also permitted to indicate their preference in terms of family size, and source country.²⁹

Private Sponsorship of Refugee Program Outcomes

The Private Sponsorship of Refugees program has also had successful social and economic outcomes. A 2007 government report found that privately sponsored refugees (PSRs) enter the labor force quicker than government-assisted refugees and are more likely than employment earnings in the first few years after arrival.³⁰ However, over time, those differences diminish. Furthermore, it found from 1998 to 2002, the most recent available numbers, 71 percent of PSR refugees were employed, which was about 25 percent higher than government assisted refugees.

PSR refugees also have higher earnings (C\$30,855) than GARs (C\$28,901).³¹ In 2007, 81 percent of PSRs received no social assistance after the initial period of sponsorship compared to 51 percent of GARs.³² Private sponsors provide less direct financial support to PSRs than the government provides to GARs, although sponsors often provide refugees with “in-kind” support that would otherwise have to be purchased, and 81 percent of SAHs, CGs, and G5s said that the provision of basic living needs and providing orientation to the community was “not difficult.” Nonetheless, 92 percent of refugees reported that sponsors were “very successful in providing basic living needs.”

The system has, however, seen some difficulties in recent years. Processing times have ballooned, leading some sponsors to discontinue their participation. In a recent survey, every church-connected SAHs expressed concern about PSR processing times.³³ Second, cuts to the Interim Federal Health program for refugees have driven up costs for sponsors. Almost a third of church-connected SAHs reported that their sponsoring groups decreased or ended their involvement due to greater liability for health costs.³⁴

The U.S. Tradition of Private Refugee Resettlement

The U.S. has a long history of privately funding the integration of immigrants and refugees. For most of the last 200 years, the government actually prohibited public aid to most immigrants, so private parties stepped up. Families and friends have always been the most important source of assistance, but private organizations, such as the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society to the Catholic Church have also facilitated integration of immigrants for more than a century.³⁵

Even today, the vast majority of non-refugee immigrants are initially integrated without access to federal funds for means-tested benefits or other forms of assistance. Academic studies have shown that this private integration has been as successful as the public alternatives.³⁶ While refugees pose unique challenges due to their forced rather than voluntary flight from their homes, this history demonstrates that civil society is willing and able to contribute significantly to the resettlement process.

Until 1945, all immigrants, including refugees, were admitted only with an individual sponsor who promised through an affidavit to care for them should they need assistance, assuring that they would not become a “public charge.” But a 1945 directive from President Harry Truman allowed private organizations to act, for the first time, as the sponsor of a refugee if the groups covered the cost of resettlement to the United States.³⁷

President Truman was adamant that his plan would produce the best outcomes. “The record of these welfare organizations throughout the past years has been excellent,” he said in his announcement. “The transportation of these immigrants across the Atlantic will not cost the American taxpayers a single dollar.”³⁸ In addition to the transportation, these organizations paid the full cost of resettlement and were “responsible for assisting refugees with employment, housing, and other basic needs.”³⁹

The experiment was deemed a success, and over the following three decades, these private organizations played the most important role in resettling refugees in the U.S. In those days, the government still required that they, like all other immigrants, would not be a “public charge,” and this assurance was fulfilled through private sponsorship.⁴⁰ After the U.S. resettled nearly 40,000 Hungarian refugees in 1956, a congressional report found that “rapid integration of the Hungarians was due to the mobilization of the private sector: voluntary resettlement agencies and their local affiliates.”⁴¹

After a large influx of refugees following the Vietnam War, the State Department entered finally into formal resettlement agreements. But the *ad hoc* agreements created disparities between different refugee groups. The Vietnamese refugees received greater benefits and were exempt from the “public charge” provision whereas other refugees who received public assistance after admission were barred from permanent residency.⁴² The agreements built up a network of public-private partnerships to resettle refugees that formed the basis of the current system, but the disparities led to calls for a reform that brought uniformity and consistency to the process.

Private Involvement in Current U.S. Refugee Resettlement

The reform came through the Refugee Act of 1980. For the first time, the U.S. created a uniform process of refugee resettlement for refugees from all nations. The new system built on the existing network of private organizations and, therefore, is still heavily dependent on the private sector. The private resettlement groups known as voluntary agencies (VolAgs) of which there are currently nine handle the actual integration of refugees in the U.S. instead of the federal government.⁴³

The VolAgs sign agreements—memoranda of understanding (MOUs)—help integrate refugees into American life by linking them to private partners, including churches, community organizations, individual volunteers, and family members. These private partners often supply a residence, teach English, provide initial transportation from the airport or to work, or find initial employment opportunities. Private partners sometimes sign memoranda of understanding (MOUs) to agree formally to help with the resettlement of refugees. Despite the lack of penalties for failure to follow through on these MOUs, defections are apparently rare, according to VolAg representatives.

However, many refugees lack any private partner other than a case manager at the VolAg. Trained case managers locate, if possible, a private partner or otherwise guarantee that the refugees’ needs are being provided for. Case managers pass along direct cash benefits from the government to the refugee, help the refugee apply for government benefits as necessary, aid in the refugee’s job search, and attempt to find volunteers to teach English or provide additional services, such as transportation.

The federal government covers most costs related to the VolAgs’ resettlement efforts and grants more than a half a billion dollars to these groups each year. Nevertheless, the private sector provides more than a quarter of the VolAgs annual revenue, and the private

contributions rise to as much as half when the monetary value of volunteer hours and private in-kind contributions.⁴⁴

Refugees entering under this process are also exempted from the “public charge” exclusion under the Immigration and Nationality Act and are immediately eligible for all the same public benefits as U.S. citizens.⁴⁵ Case managers at the voluntary agencies walk refugees through benefit applications, leading to relatively high application and use rates among recent refugee groups compared to the native-born population.

President Reagan’s Private Sector Initiative

The Refugee Act placed no statutory limit on the number of refugees who could be admitted, but the number was limited in fact by the amount of money set aside by Congress for resettlement. For this reason, President Ronald Reagan began exploring ways to increase refugees beyond the number that congressional appropriations could support. In 1983, James Purcell, the new Director of the Bureau of Refugee Programs, started to explore the idea of privately sponsored refugees after the administration failed to obtain sufficient congressional funding to expand the refugee admission program.

Purcell, along with Secretary of State George Schultz, presented the idea of private sponsorship to President Reagan. According to Purcell, the president was “excited” about the idea and told them to “take it as far as it would go.” The concept, says Purcell, was initially implemented for Vietnamese refugees in fiscal years 1984 to 1986 and included about two or three thousand refugees.⁴⁶ After this initial proof of concept, President Reagan announced the creation of the Private Sector Initiative, a privately funded refugee program in 1986.⁴⁷

In addition to the normal quotas for each region of the world, the Presidential Directive that established the refugee limits for 1987 created “an unallocated reserve” of refugee slots that could be used by people from any region. “The Congress shall be notified in advance if there is a need to use numbers from the unallocated reserve,” the president said in his announcement in October 1986. “The admission of refugees using numbers from this reserve shall be contingent upon the availability of private sector funding sufficient to cover the essential and reasonable costs of such admissions.”⁴⁸

In renewing the program for FY 1988, President Reagan emphasized “that no federal program funds shall be expended for such admissions.”⁴⁹ He also added that “privately funded admissions may be used for refugees of special humanitarian concern to the United States in any region of the world at any time during the fiscal year.”⁵⁰

According to Jewel LaFontant-Mankarious, the U.S. Coordinator for Refugee Affairs under President George H.W. Bush, the program was “founded on the belief that, in a time of significant constraints on all public budgets and expenditures, a privately-funded program would enable some refugees to enter and be resettled in the United States who might not otherwise be admitted because of limitations on the funded programs.”⁵¹ A desire to prevent welfare dependency may have also motivated President Reagan. His

outline for immigration reform in 1981 included a promise to “seek new ways to integrate refugees into our society without nurturing their dependence on welfare.”⁵²

The Private Sector Initiative (PSI) allowed U.S. ethnic organizations to enter into Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with the State Department’s U.S. Coordinator of Refugee Affairs to resettle refugees.⁵³ There was no limit on the number or type of organizations eligible to apply. MOUs between the State Department and private organizations were — and still are — the basis for all U.S. refugee resettlement. But under PSI, organizations that signed up to perform resettlement would actually impact the number of refugees being admitted. Rather than just helping resettle refugees who would have been admitted anyway under the normal refugee limit, organizations were directly responsible for refugees coming to the United States.

The Immigration and Naturalization Service vetted the sponsors.⁵⁴ PSI sponsoring organizations also helped refugees prepare refugee claims and advise them on how to handle interviews with U.S. refugee officials overseas.⁵⁵ Some refugees were designated as “unfunded” after they arrived in the United States based on their likelihood of success in the labor market. The MOUs required sponsors provide food, housing, medical insurance, and cash assistance.⁵⁶ According to the MOU signed by CJF and HIAS, sponsoring organizations must be:

responsible for the cost of admission (processing, transportation, documentation, medical examination), Reception and Placement and resettlement of all privately funded refugees for two years after admission of those refugees to the United States, or until they attained permanent residency status (i.e. green cards), whichever came first.⁵⁷

Resettlement costs for the organizations varied widely from \$1,500 to \$9,000 per refugee in 1992 (\$2,550 to \$15,300 in 2015 dollars).⁵⁸ Publicly funded refugees cost the U.S. government about \$7,000 in 1989 (\$13,500 in 2015 dollars).⁵⁹

PSI-refugees did not “financially qualify for publicly funded medical, food, or cash assistance for two years after their admission to the United States or until they attain lawful permanent resident status.”⁶⁰ They were also ineligible for special refugee-related service programs.⁶¹ Refugees with sponsors were deemed to not meet income-thresholds for means-tested benefits. Refugees who applied for benefits would present their I-94 INS Arrival-Departure Record as identification. The I-94 form for PSI indicated that the refugee was privately sponsored and that private resources may be available.

Welfare offices called the sponsors to identify whether resources were available.⁶² If a refugee applied, the sponsor was required to “counsel” the refugee and supply any support that they need.⁶³ Theoretically, however, PSI refugees who needed benefits were eligible,⁶⁴ though it is unclear whether any accessed them. The Rhode Island Department of Human Services (DHS) Manual, for example, told offices that:

The sponsorship statement... should be regarded as lead information concerning possible income and resources that are available to the refugee. DHS and FS agency representatives are obligated to follow-up with the sponsoring agency to ascertain the actual availability of any income and resources and to use such verified information in the final decision on whether or not the refugee is eligible for assistance. It is inappropriate to simply deny an application filed by a sponsored refugee solely because of the statement on the I-94.⁶⁵

If the sponsor failed in its responsibilities, the refugee was entitled federal benefits, and the PSI MOU stated that “the sponsoring agency must reimburse the federal, state, and local governments for any assistance the refugee may receive.”⁶⁶

Between 1987 and 1993, at least five organizations signed PSI MOUs: Cuban American National Foundation (CANF), the Zoroastrian Association of North America, the Vietnamese Resettlement Association, Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS) and the Conference for Jewish Federations (CJF).⁶⁷ According to Princeton Lyman, Assistant Secretary of State for Refugee Affairs from 1989 to 1992, Pentecostal Christians were also privately resettled in 1990, though no public record of this was found.⁶⁸

In 1991, the State Department officials testified that Assyrian Christians were going to bring in a certain number of privately sponsored refugees and indicated that they were attempting to recruit Ethiopian Christians.⁶⁹ While there is no clear evidence whether this occurred, the *New York Times* reported in 1992 that “refugee groups—Cubans, Vietnamese, Ethiopians, and the Zoroastrians of Iran—have gone beyond volunteer and social work to sponsor and subsidize refugees the Government will not admit... [i]n an unusual private-sector immigration program.”⁷⁰

The vast majority of PSI-refugees were Cubans and Jews from the Soviet Union. In an effort dubbed “Project Exodus,” CANF began to use PSI in 1988 to bring Cubans who the Castro regime had stranded abroad. CANF registered as a VolAg and funded Cuban resettlement to the U.S. Nearly 8,000 Cubans were resettled from Panama, Venezuela, Spain, Costa Rica, and the Dominican Republic from 1988 to 1993.⁷¹

In the late 1980s, the Soviet Union began to liberalize emigration. The U.S. responded by expanding admissions of refugees from the Soviet Union, with a preference for religious minorities.⁷² The numbers quickly reached unprecedented levels. The Soviet allotment jumped from 15,000 to 50,000 from 1987 to 1990 and benefits for refugees were cut dramatically. In 1990, the Bush administration recruited HIAS and CJF to fund the one-time admission of 10,000 Soviet Jewish refugees. Nearly 8,000 ended up coming, roughly 20 percent of all Jewish refugees in 1990.⁷³

Private Sector Initiative Results

Despite concerns that there would be a tradeoff between additional private entries and additional public ones,⁷⁴ PSI and federal numbers moved in the same direction. From fiscal year 1988 to 1993, PSI resettled at least 16,016 refugees, 2,700 per year from FY

1988 to FY1993. There were 7,802 Soviet Jews, 7,905 Cubans, and 45 Vietnamese and Iranians, though there may have been others, like the Jews, which were not included in the official PSI quota.⁷⁵ These numbers were still far less than the 51,000 eligible to enter under PSI from 1987 to 1995, but leading officials and refugee organizations at the time strongly supported the program and considered it a successful endeavor.

In 1990, the State Department told Congress that the U.S. Coordinator for Refugee Affairs was “very proud” of the program, and that it has made a “substantial contribution to our refugee program.” Deputy Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger also called the program “successful” in 1990, and ORR’s 1990 report to Congress stated that it “strongly endorses the Private Sector Initiative and is committed to encouraging the involvement of the private sector in refugee resettlement wherever possible.”⁷⁶

In 1991, U.S. Coordinator for Refugee Affairs Jewel LaFontant-Mankarious told Congress that PSI was “excellent” because “it gives people an opportunity to contribute.... reaching out and helping others like themselves to come in and enjoy the fruits of this country.” Even some of the traditional VolAgs were receptive to PSI. Richard Ryscavage, USCCB Executive Director of Migration and Refugee Services, told Congress in 1991 that PSI “work[s] for more well-established ethnic communities and can incrementally increase admissions.”⁷⁷

The Clinton administration, however, did not renew PSI in 1996, stating that it was too “difficult for many organizations to meet the financial requirements.”⁷⁸ This was really only true for health insurance. The Senate Judiciary Committee found in 1992 that “private sector organizations resettling refugees have grown reluctant to commit themselves to private sector resettlement initiatives because of unpredictable and inflationary medical costs.”⁷⁹ The issue became so difficult for CANF that the Department of Health and Human Services granted the nonprofit \$1,700 per refugee for the last 1,000 refugees that it resettled under PSI.⁸⁰

Another difficulty was that sponsors were required to continue to support refugees under PSI, even if the refugee rejected a “reasonable” job offer. The CJF review of the pilot program called this requirement a “major problem” for the program.⁸¹ Nonetheless, 84 percent of those placed in small communities (where the only systematic tracking was done) were employed after a year.⁸²

PSI’s underuse, however, was not solely a matter of cost. The process to enroll as a PSI organization was arduous with many groups deterred from even applying.⁸³ Moreover, Freedom of Information Act requests revealed that some officials considered the program unfair because it created a preference for certain established immigrant populations.⁸⁴ But the private sponsors argued that PSI was open to all groups and that it opened up public slots for less established immigrant groups.⁸⁵

After failing to approve a single application for PSI, the Clinton administration allowed it to sunset in 1996, despite lobbying from Iraqi Christians who wished to use the program.⁸⁶ President Reagan’s “unallocated reserve” was converted to a publicly funded

quota that could be used by refugees from any region of the world.⁸⁷ All subsequent administrations have followed this precedent.⁸⁸

Implementing U.S. Privately Funded Refugee Resettlement Today

The United States should learn from Canada's experience as well as its own and create a privately funded refugee category as President Reagan did under PSI. The Canadian experience demonstrates the feasibility of a consistent flow of privately funded refugee resettlement. Both experiences show that increases in admissions of privately sponsored refugees correspond to increases in admissions of publicly funded refugees. Public and private admissions complement, rather than displace, each other.

The U.S. can implement private refugee resettlement without completely jettisoning the current system. An important lesson from PSI was that requiring private sponsors to recreate the resettlement capacity on a limited or temporary basis is expecting too much. The U.S. should continue to rely on the VolAgs to coordinate resettlement and act as oversight over private partners who wish to sponsor and support a refugee. People can already sign up to volunteer to aid refugee resettlement, but the goal should be to incentivize the private sector to donate and volunteer to expand the current process.

As an initial step toward private sponsorship, the president should create a privately funded refugee category with a separate quota—in addition to the quotas for geographical regions—for refugees that are privately funded. The Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) and the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) should create a private resettlement account to receive donations from the public and philanthropists who wish to fund additional refugee resettlement. The White House could promote donations to the VolAg-held account, as it did following the Haiti earthquake in 2010 for the Clinton-Bush Haiti Fund, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit.⁸⁹

ORR and PRM should work with the VolAgs to determine what President Reagan labeled the “reasonable and essential cost” of resettling an additional refugee. Each time the private resettlement account crossed that predetermined threshold, the State Department would be required to admit an additional refugee under the private quota in the following fiscal year. The refugee would be admitted under the same procedures and with the same access to benefits as any other refugee. The only difference would be that the VolAgs would work to integrate them into U.S. society using the funds from the private resettlement account.

This system has a variety of benefits, including some advantages over PSI and the Canadian system. First, it would not require any changes to the resettlement process, which would make it the easiest to implement. Unlike PSI and Canada's system, it would not require getting new people to sign up to perform resettlement or additional bureaucracy to process sponsorship applications or to enforce their agreements. It would also create consistency in the cost of resettlement, which was a major problem for PSI.

The only drawback to the privately funded only approach is that it would lose the direct and often personal connection between the sponsor and the refugee, which is a powerful motivator to become involved. Fortunately, a transition to private *sponsorship* could be easily built upon this initial system. Individuals who are family members of refugees can already submit an affidavit of relationship to the State Department and, in effect, “sponsor” their family member for refugee status in the United States without the typical UNHCR referral.⁹⁰

The State Department should expand this procedure—known as the Priority-3 program—by removing a variety of constraints on the program. Sponsors are currently eligible only if they were themselves admitted as a refugee or asylee in the previous five years and are family members of the refugee—a definition that excludes adult or married children, adult siblings, grandparents, aunts, uncles, or cousins.⁹¹ Eliminating these restrictions would expand the eligible sponsor pool dramatically.

An expanded Priority-3 program could be combined with a private resettlement account. This would require family members who wished to access both programs to file an Affidavit of Relationship (AOR) with the nearest local VolAg affiliate along with a contribution to the resettlement account equal to the threshold for triggering an additional admission. Family members would then undergo DNA testing to verify the family relationship and sign a memorandum of understanding with the VolAg to engage in the resettlement process with the VolAg. After the requisite fraud and other criminal background checks were finished, the refugees would be admitted the following fiscal year, if they had also cleared the current security checks.

Expansions to permit churches and other organization to be sponsors would require congressional action. But such an expansion would be an easy addition to this system. Churches or other community organizations would be required to sign up with the VolAgs as many currently do. Individuals at these churches or other organizations would obviously also need to clear background checks. They would then submit a contribution to the resettlement account in the amount necessary to meet the threshold requirements that the resettlement of whatever number of refugees that they wished to sponsor.

Conclusion

With a worldwide refugee crisis, the United States has a duty to not block the escape of refugees fleeing persecution and violence abroad. But with limited federal funds, the U.S. government will need to create an avenue for private citizens to fulfill this moral imperative. The U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees has advocated privately funded refugee programs, and some important nations, such as Germany and Australia, have already responded to this call. The United States should follow their lead and open its philanthropic doors to save more refugees from violence, persecution, and poverty.

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**Post-Hearing Question for the Record
Submitted to Guidy Mamann
From Senator Joni Ernst**

**“Canada’s Fast-Track Refugee Plan: Unanswered Questions and Implications for U.S.
National Security”**

February 3, 2016

1. Please provide an overview of the process by which the Canada Government resettles refugees within Canada. Specially, how does the government decide where to initially resettle refugees, and does the central government work with the provincial governments in making that determination?

There are four different categories of refugees in Canada and the process of resettlement differs between them. The categories of refugees are as follows:

1. Government-assisted;
2. Privately sponsored;
3. Blended visa-office referred; and
4. Inland assessed.

Government Assisted Refugees (GARs)

GARs are refugees, who are referred to the Canadian government for resettlement by the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR). Once referred and accepted, GARs are supported for one year following arrival or until able to support themselves. The Canadian government is solely responsible for the financial and practical support of these refugees, with the exception of those selected by the province of Quebec. If selected by the latter, the responsibility of financial support falls on the Quebec provincial government.

Typically the federal government works with resettlement agencies whom have relationships with municipalities. Therefore, the location of resettlement for GARs is largely dependent on the location of the resettlement agencies willing to assist.

Resettlement location

The federal government works with resettlement organizations in all provinces and thus, a GAR may theoretically be resettled in any of these regions.

Privately Sponsored Refugees (PSRs)

PSRs are those deemed to meet the eligibility requirements of either the Convention Refugee Abroad class or the Country of Asylum class. These refugees are referred by a private sponsor, usually an entity or group in Canada who agrees to provide financial and social support for a period of one year.

There are three groups that may submit a private sponsorship:

1. **Sponsorship Agreement Holders** (SAH) which must be incorporated organizations that have signed a sponsorship agreement with Citizenship and Immigration (CIC). Most of these organizations are cultural, religious or humanitarian in nature.
2. **Constituent Groups** (CG) are another group that may sponsor privately, yet only under the authority of a Sponsorship Agreement Holders. This means that a group must first meet the criteria as set out by the SAH to be recognized as a CG. CGs are usually formed in the proposed sponsored refugee's community of settlement.
3. **Groups of Five** (G5) is where five or more adult Canadian citizens or permanent residents who live in the expected community of settlement undertake to provide necessary support of the refugee.

Private sponsoring groups are responsible for providing financial support, lodging, social and emotional support, along with resettlement assistance such as enrolling children in school or employment searches.

Resettlement location

As private sponsors are responsible for support and assistance, their sponsored refugees are usually settled within the community of the organization or group.

Blended Visa Office-Referred Refugees (BVORs)

BVORs are those refugees which are referred by the UNHCR but are matched with a private sponsor in Canada. This category is a hybrid between government-assisted and privately sponsored. The Government of Canada provides six months of income support to the refugee through the Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP), while the private sponsor will be responsible for a further six months of financial support and up to a year in social and emotional support.

Resettlement location

Similar to PSRs, BVORs are usually resettled in the community of the private sponsor so that the sponsor is properly able to provide the required support and guidance.

Inland Assessed

This group is comprised of individuals who have left their country of persecution and made a claim for refugee protection either upon arriving in Canada or following their arrival. These individuals are initially screened and interviewed by an officer to assess their eligibility to proceed with a claim. They are next referred to a hearing before the Immigration and Refugee Board which will assess the merits of the case. If successful, the individual is granted refugee status in Canada and is permitted to submit an application for permanent residence for themselves and their dependents.

These inland assessed refugees have access to support social support in Canada by way of standard social assistance, but are not directly sponsored or financially supported by a private sponsor or the Government of Canada.

Resettlement location

Refugees in this category determine the location of their own resettlement in Canada.

2. Please provide an overview of any differences that might exist between the processes or demographics of refugees coming into Canada through private sponsors and those coming in through the Canadian Government.

	Government Sponsorship	Private Sponsorship
Process:	<p>For those refugees who will be sponsored by the Canadian government, an overseas Canadian visa office will select refugees who are assessed and referred by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees ("UNHCR") in the following manner:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In their home countries, the local UNHCR office will provide the local Canadian office with a Refugee Referral Form ("RRF"), which contains the refugee claim, family composition, and other pertinent information about the individual or family; 2. Canadian visa officials will select candidates for resettlement in Canada from this pool; 3. Selected refugees are notified of the option to resettle in Canada; then 4. Once a refugee decides to settle in Canada, the Canadian visa office begins to process their application for permanent residence, which includes background checks. 	<p>Those refugees who will be sponsored privately do not have to wait to be assessed and referred by the UNHCR Agency. Instead, a prospective candidate must obtain a document from the UNHCR proving their refugee status. With that document, they can be sponsored by one of the following groups:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sponsorship Agreement Holder ("SAH")¹ or 2. Group of Five² <p>An application to sponsor a refugee is submitted by a sponsor and processed from <i>within</i> Canada at the Centralized Processing Office in Winnipeg ("CPO"). The CPO will consider financial and non-financial aspects of the sponsorship, and consider an overall settlement plan, before approving the sponsorship. Any application will also need to include the UNHCR proof of refugee status obtained by the applicant.</p> <p>Once the application to sponsor is</p>

¹ **Sponsorship Agreement Holder ("SAH"):** is an incorporated organization (i.e. religious institution, humanitarian organization) that has signed a formal sponsorship agreement with the Government of Canada. These organizations typically submit several refugee claims a year.

² **Group of Five:** Five or more Canadian citizens may collectively arrange for the sponsorship and settlement of refugees in Canada. The group acts as guarantors that the necessary support will be provided for the full one-year duration of the sponsorship, and the members of the group must demonstrate financial ability to assist the refugee applicants. Another form of Group of Five is a Community Sponsor ("CS"), which can be any organization, incorporated or not, or for-profit or not, which are willing to sponsor a refugee, and can demonstrate that the organization is willing and able to commit funds towards the sponsorship.

	Immigration processing related to security, medical and biometrics is handled by the federal government for both government sponsored and privately sponsored refugees.	approved, the remainder of the application is processed at the visa office abroad where the refugee applicant is living.																																												
	As of September 19, 2015, the Government of Canada has temporarily exempted Syrians and Iraqis fleeing the conflict in Syria from the requirement of providing proof of refugee status from the UNHCR. Government sponsored refugees are still however selected from UNHCR camps, so this exemption does not necessarily apply to them.	As a result of the September 19, 2015 exemption, privately sponsored refugees coming from Syria and/or Iraq have one less processing requirement, as they do not have to provide proof of their refugee status, as compared to their government sponsored counterparts.																																												
	There is also a hybrid process in Canada called the Blended Visa Office-Referred ("BVOR") Program . Pursuant to this program, the UNHCR will identify refugees, and refer them to the Government of Canada. The Government of Canada will then agree to provide up to six-months of income support through the Resettlement Assistance Program ("RAP"), while private sponsors will provide another six-months of financial support, and up to a year of social and emotional support for the refugees sponsored through this program.																																													
Demographics	In 2014, the top 10 countries where government sponsored refugees originated were as follows ¹ :	In 2014, the top 10 countries where privately sponsored refugees originated were as follows ² :																																												
	<table><tr><th>Country</th><th>Government-assisted refugees</th></tr><tr><td>Iraq</td><td>2,170</td></tr><tr><td>Iran</td><td>1,020</td></tr><tr><td>Congo</td><td>945</td></tr><tr><td>Somalia</td><td>460</td></tr><tr><td>Eritrea</td><td>435</td></tr><tr><td>Syria</td><td>385</td></tr><tr><td>Bhutan</td><td>350</td></tr><tr><td>Burma</td><td>305</td></tr><tr><td>Burundi</td><td>225</td></tr><tr><td>Colombia</td><td>175</td></tr></table>	Country	Government-assisted refugees	Iraq	2,170	Iran	1,020	Congo	945	Somalia	460	Eritrea	435	Syria	385	Bhutan	350	Burma	305	Burundi	225	Colombia	175	<table><tr><th>Country</th><th>Privately sponsored refugees</th></tr><tr><td>Eritrea</td><td>1,150</td></tr><tr><td>Syria</td><td>700</td></tr><tr><td>Somalia</td><td>590</td></tr><tr><td>Iraq</td><td>580</td></tr><tr><td>Afghanistan</td><td>525</td></tr><tr><td>Ethiopia</td><td>415</td></tr><tr><td>Congo</td><td>115</td></tr><tr><td>Pakistan</td><td>75</td></tr><tr><td>Stateless</td><td>70</td></tr><tr><td>Sudan</td><td>45</td></tr></table>	Country	Privately sponsored refugees	Eritrea	1,150	Syria	700	Somalia	590	Iraq	580	Afghanistan	525	Ethiopia	415	Congo	115	Pakistan	75	Stateless	70	Sudan	45
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³ Daniel Schwartz, "Canada's Refugees by the Numbers: the data", *CBC News*, 4 October 2015, online at <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/canada-s-refugees-by-the-numbers-the-data-1.3240640>

⁴ *Ibid.*

	Top 10 total	6,470	Top 10 total	4,265																							
	Total	7,575	Total	4,560																							
	<p>Note that the above figures are the number of refugees who made claims from <i>outside</i> of Canada. The number of refugees who arrived first in Canada and then made a refugee claim from <i>within</i> Canada ("IRB Acceptances"), for that same year, are as follows</p> <table><tr><th>Country</th><th>IRB Acceptances</th></tr><tr><td>China</td><td>907</td></tr><tr><td>Pakistan</td><td>858</td></tr><tr><td>Syria</td><td>678</td></tr><tr><td>Colombia</td><td>409</td></tr><tr><td>Afghanistan</td><td>395</td></tr><tr><td>Hungary</td><td>339</td></tr><tr><td>Nigeria</td><td>331</td></tr><tr><td>Iraq</td><td>324</td></tr><tr><td>Egypt</td><td>297</td></tr><tr><td>Iran</td><td>255</td></tr><tr><td>Top 10 total</td><td>4793</td></tr></table>				Country	IRB Acceptances	China	907	Pakistan	858	Syria	678	Colombia	409	Afghanistan	395	Hungary	339	Nigeria	331	Iraq	324	Egypt	297	Iran	255	Top 10 total
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	Government sponsored refugees from overseas (as opposed to those who are making their refugee claim from <i>within</i> Canada) are more likely to be crisis-related refugees (i.e. those are admitted as a result of specific efforts by the government to help people affected by crisis in their home countries). This fact is reflected in the figures above.		Privately sponsored refugees may arrive in Canada as a result of a specific crisis overseas (for example, privately sponsored Syrian refugees), and as a result that demographic would have to depend on the crisis. For the large majority of privately sponsored refugees however, because of the familial nature of the sponsorship, their demographic mirrors the demographic of the sponsor.																								
			Otherwise, even if the sponsor and applicant are not related, privately sponsored refugees more often than not mirror the demographic qualities of the sponsor since they will be living in the same community as the sponsor, and as a result will likely be of the same demographic as the Canadian community they will be																								

		entering.
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**Post-Hearing Question for the Record
Submitted to Dr. Laura Dawson
From Senator Joni Ernst**

**“Canada’s Fast-Track Refugee Plan: Unanswered Questions and Implications for U.S.
National Security”**

February 3, 2016

1. Please provide an overview of the process by which the Canadian Government resettles refugees within Canada. Specifically, how does the government decide where to initially resettle refugees, and does the central government work with the provincial governments in making that determination?

Response: As a policy analyst at an independent think tank, my work is to interpret developments based on information available in the public domain. Unfortunately, the most accurate sources for the information you seek are within the Government of Canada and involve internal governmental decision making. I suggest therefore that you request this information from the Government of Canada. A helpful point of contact is Ms. Meaghan Sunderland at the Canadian embassy in Washington (Meaghan.Sunderland@international.gc.ca)

2. Please provide an overview of any differences that might exist between the processes or demographics of refugees coming into Canada through private sponsors and those coming in through the Canadian Government.

Response: This information is similarly outside my scope of knowledge and involves reference to databases held at Canada’s federal department of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (formerly Citizenship and Immigration Canada, <http://www.cic.gc.ca/>). Once again, the contact person at the Canadian embassy could direct you to the most up-to-date information.

Effective information sharing between the United States and Canada is a priority for both partners and finding ways to improve this process is beneficial for all concerned. Thank you for your commitment to this endeavor.